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BIBLE TEXT SERIES

THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE

EDMUND F. COOK

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BIBLE TEXT SERIES

THE Missionary Message of the Bible

By
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Episcopal Church, South

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THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED

TO HER WHO HAS JOYFULLY TAKEN
PART WITH ME IN EVERY SERVICE
AND CHEERFULLY SHARED
IN EVERY SACRIFICE

My Wife

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PREFACE

THIS book is not a thesis on missions nor a treatise about the Bible but a guide to the study of the Bible itself. It has been prepared at the request of the General Sunday School Board and the General Board of Missions through their Editorial and Home Cultivation Committees respectively. It is designed as a textbook for the use of the two Boards in their Leadership Training Courses and as an elective in the courses offered in the Sunday school.

In order to share fully in any enterprise one needs to have a clear understanding of what is involved in its program; to invest freely in the enterprise one must have a very definite conviction as to its feasibility and as to its adaptation to the ultimate ends desired. In this effort to aid the student we seek to clear up such problems regarding God's missionary plan for the world. It is hoped that this book may have a circulation sufficiently wide to increase greatly the number of those who are intelligently interested in missions and who regard the movement as of God and as directly related as a mode of procedure to the ultimate triumphs of his kingdom among men. It is especially intended as an aid to Christian workers who are seeking more thorough preparation for leadership in the local Church and, along with other special studies, desire to survey the books of the Bible that they may discover those missionary elements in the Biblical records which have inspired the missionary program of the Church of to-day and which constitute the basis of Christian obligation.

It is hoped also that the college student who is facing the question of life service may find in a study of this book the aid he desires in understanding God's plan for the world and in discovering his own place in that plan.

We do not undertake to find authority for the missionary movement in proof texts or detached passages. They are numerous enough, but such a procedure would do violence to proper methods of Bible study. Our plan then is not to enter into a minute examination of certain texts or passages selected from all parts of the Scripture, but rather to survey the Scriptures as a whole. As we proceed we will try to think of God in his relation to men and nations, to trace his purposes as they are unfolded in the Old Testament and then in the New Testament, to study the great men through whom God wrought out his plans and the great movements through which he prepared for the coming of Christ and the extension of his kingdom among men. We will seek to discover in clear outline the aim and scope of the mission of Jesus, to define the plan of procedure which he suggests, and to measure the forces available to the Church for the successful prosecution of these plans.

In a few chapters there is a measure of repetition. However, attention is called to the fact that when we repeat the thought or quote for the second time a passage of Scripture the approach to the subject is from a different point of view or for the sake of a different emphasis. Therefore the repetition is intended to bring out the naturalness with which the missionary element, no matter from what angle a subject is approached, enters into the story of God's dealing with men.

If the spiritual blessing for which the author prays results from this study of the Scriptures, each reader must keep constantly in mind the questions: What kind of God is here revealed? What is his purpose? What is his plan? What is my place in his plan?

We have found of great value in our studies such books as "The Bible a Missionary Book," by Robert F. Horton, "Missions in the Plan of the Ages," by William Owen Carver, and "The Christian Adventure," by A. Herbert Gray. Several quotations, with due acknowledgment, have been used from these

authors. We earnestly recommend the use of these three books for reference wherever possible by the student taking our course in "The Missionary Message of the Bible."

Acknowledgment is hereby made also to Dr. George B. Winton, Rev. John L. Ferguson, and Mrs. Ed F. Cook for reading the manuscript and for valuable suggestions and to Miss Willie Mae Blackman for verifying the references and typing the manuscript.

In quoting passages from the Bible we have used the American Revised Version.

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The Missionary Message of the Bible

CHAPTER I

OUR THEORY OF MISSIONS

MEASURED by what is proposed in its program, Christian missions is the biggest and the boldest enterprise on earth. It is more far-reaching in its aim, affects a greater diversity of human interests, and is more revolutionary in its influence upon the thought and life of men and nations than any other movement of modern times. Viewed in its practical aspects, it is a stupendous undertaking. To carry it forward successfully will require the sacrificial service of many thousands of men and women and the investment of vast sums of money.

We are continually urged to participate in this great movement; to give time to its study, or to consider it as a field of life service, or to invest in it large sums of money, or to give our sons and daughters to its prosecution. It behooves us, therefore, to determine whether missions is the vagary of religious enthusiasts or a plan of divine procedure. Let us ask ourselves: Is the modern missionary program a part of God's plan for the world? Was it in the thought of Jesus as he trained and commissioned the twelve? Did Jesus undertake to make his Church in any way responsible for its success? If God proposed it, and Jesus planned for it, and his Church is expected to prosecute it, there must be a message regarding the matter in the Bible. It is to discover the exact nature and extent of the Bible message regarding missions that we have undertaken these studies.

To prepare the way for the study of the Book itself let us agree, if we can, as to a definition of the term

missions, as to the origin of the missionary idea, and as to the literature available to us for such a study as is proposed.

I. The Definition of Missions

With a right approach it is quite possible to develop a satisfactory definition. Drawing upon the genius of the Bible story, the philosophy of human history, and the experience of men who have lived closest to the heartbeat of the nations, we have materials from which to construct a theory of missions and which will guide us in formulating a definition. In an adequate definition we discover the real character and aim of the missionary enterprise.

1. Missions Means a Passion for Humanity.—It is the passion which moved the heart of an infinite God to serve mankind, to seek man's deliverance from sin that he might walk in newness of life and have fellowship with the Father. "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sin, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest: but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 1-6.) "So we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 4b. Read 2 Corinthians v. 17; Colossians iii. 10.)

To Christians "missions" means the same love, the same longing to serve humanity, the same desire

to help, to uplift, to set free, to bring the children of men into the knowledge and fellowship of God that Christ felt. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John iv. 10, 11.) He who has never been stirred by this passion has never known the meaning of missions. This passion explains Melville Cox, who, dying on the west coast of Africa, sent home the message: "Though a thousand fall, let not Africa be given up." Such love expresses itself in personal interest, in individual action, and in the organization of agencies for ministering to mankind.

2. **Missions Means a Movement to Illuminate Spiritual Darkness.**—It is a movement through which the people that walk in darkness come to see the great light, and by which the light shines upon them that are dwelling in the land of deep darkness. (Isa. ix. 2, marginal reading.) Jesus is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Every movement to make known the Life Light of man, which shines away the darkness of a benighted world, is in our thought when we employ the term missions.

When I think of missions I think of the noble torch-bearers of the gospel who have moved out into the world's darkness. Is it not significant that in the very heart of "Darkest Africa" when Livingstone's dead body was found he was kneeling by his bedside, his Bible open before him on the bed, and his candle still burning on the stand? The abandon with which Carey, Morrison, Livingstone, Moffatt, and other pioneers gave themselves to the work of opening a darkened world to the light enables us to read meaning into the word "missions."

3. **Missions Means Telling the Good News.**—"Missions is the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom where it is news." (Carver.) This may mean across your back alley, around the corner, in

the slums of your city, in the mountain coves, or on the frontiers of the American continent, or far in the interior of Africa, or in the remote provinces of China. The delivery of the message of salvation wherever it is news is missions. Such a conception completely eliminates the sharp distinction so often implied in the terms "home" and "foreign" as applied to missions. When I think of missions I think of young Zenas Loftis, a Nashville boy, pushing his way through barred doors into the wretched darkness of Tibet in order to tell a benighted people the good news and all it means of life, love, and healing to suffering and sinful humanity. I think of him dying of smallpox, far from home and alone, a daring herald of the Cross. I think of the message to the home Church which fell from his parched lips as his life burned out: "Let others come, that these who have never heard may hear the good news."

4. **Missions Means Making God Real.**—"Missions means the extensive realization of God's redemptive purpose in Christ by means of human messengers." (Carver.) We intensively realize God's redemptive purpose in Christ when we accept Christ as a personal Saviour. Entering into this experience, its normal impulse is to tell others of what a Saviour we have found. We naturally become missionaries and seek to extend that realization of Jesus Christ to our neighbors, and then to those afar off who have never heard of Jesus and his love and who consequently walk in darkness, superstitition, and sin.

A missionary, then, is one sent on a mission. His mission is the delivery of a message. His message is the good news of salvation. So vital in Christian experience is this passion for humanity, this longing to make Christ known to men, that every true Christian is instinctively a missionary. To him missions is central in his sense of obligation and in his program of life. He will not tolerate the idea that missions is something extraneous to the Christian life or

something tacked on to the Church program. No! He sees missions as a passion burning in the heart of God and enkindling in his own soul through fellowship with the Eternal. When I think of missions, I think of Paul, in his passionate earnestness, crying: "I could have wished myself accursed and banished from Christ for the sake of my brothers." (Rom. ix. 3, Moffatt.) Or of Paul before Agrippa, boldly proclaiming his call from God to preach the gospel to both Jew and Gentile and gladly paying the price of obedience in untold suffering. (Read Acts xxvi. 19-23.)

5. **Missions Means Bringing In the Kingdom.**—To the individual Christian it means doing one's utmost to answer the prayer: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." (Matt. vi. 10.) To pray effectually the "Lord's Prayer" we must live and work toward the ends in view in the petition. In the Christian social order missions means an organized movement to conform human society to the will of God and to make the ideals of Jesus the prevailing practice among men and nations. It is not surprising then that, in this pattern prayer taught by Jesus to his disciples, the first petition is for the universal sway of the righteous God.

II. The Origin of Missions

Where did the missionary idea originate? It did not originate with Carey, Morrison, Moffatt, Livingstone, or any of the pioneers of the missionary awakening of the nineteenth century. It did not originate with the New Testament writers nor with Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, nor with Jesus of Nazareth.

1. **Missions Originated in the Heart of God.**—The great soul of the pioneer missionary was enkindled from an inextinguishable flame of missionary passion which burned in the heart of God. The Bible opens to us the origin of the missionary idea in

making known God's nature and God's relationship to man. The source of the missionary idea, then, is found to be in the heart of God. "God is love." (1 John iv. 8b.) Whom does he love? Can we think of an eternal God of infinite love as loving a single race or nation to the exclusion of any or all others? Does God love only the Anglo-Saxon race? Does he fail to love the Mongolian? Can we restrict, limit, or confine the love of God within racial or geographical lines? God is our Father. "One God and Father of all." (Eph. iv. 6.) Whose Father? The Father only of the Anglo-Saxon? Can we think of God the Father as bearing this intimate and tender relationship to one race, with all other races alien to him? Can we restrict or limit in our thinking to racial or geographical lines the kinship of God and the children of men? Out of his nature, which is love, out of his kinship to man, which is that of Father, arises the great missionary passion of the Eternal.

The Bible reveals love and fatherhood in action. We see in every book on almost every page the outreach, the onward sweep of the redeeming love in the Father's heart. We see the loving Father working out a divine redemptive scheme for all the world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." (John iii. 16, 17.) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." (2 Cor. v. 19a.) "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) "Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. . . . So shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they understand." (Isa. lii. 10, 15.) "Who in time past were

no people, but now are the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter ii. 10.)

The clear implications of the Fatherhood are familyhood, brotherhood, mutuality of love and helpfulness. The missionary program of the Church, therefore, is not based upon a few proof texts taken here and there from the Bible, but rather rests deep in the love of God and in his Fatherhood and the obligations arising from kinship to him and to one another. If God is Father to all, then all are his children, and there is inherent in their kinship the obligation to share the blessings and benefits of the Father's grace and providence. The Old Testament bears abundant evidence that God moved in universal love to men centuries before he was manifested as Immanuel—God with us. The New Testament is even clearer and more conclusive as to the nature and scope of divine love. Note how the conceptions of Zacharias, Joseph, Elizabeth, Mary, the angel, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna are expressed in universal terms. We should expect them to reflect the narrow nationalism and particularism of the Jews; but under the inspiration of the Spirit, employing phrases of the ancient prophets and poets of Israel, they reach with a divine universalism into future generations and seem to encompass all men and nations in their understanding of Israel's Messianic hope fulfilled in the Babe of Bethlehem.

The universal love and all-inclusive mercy of God, which issue in a divine redemptive scheme for all men, run through the whole book like a crystal stream through a fertile valley. They are seen in his dealings with Israel, in the prophets' description of Messiah's mission, in the life, teachings, and commands of Jesus, and in the obedience of his followers in all ages.

III. The Textbook of Missions

For God's missionary message the Bible is the textbook. Here is God's revelation of himself to

man and the unfolding of his program for the world. Here we find the Father and here we see the Father love working out a plan of redemption for all men. "Here are the promises of a Messiah to come, the story of his coming, and the record of the preparation of the kingdom of heaven, its principles and its progress. Not that the story is to be found only here. 'All history is just his story.'" We can fully appreciate the modern missionary movement only as we realize how missions runs through the whole Book and through the thought of God in his dealings with men in all ages. We can fully value our textbook in this study only as we remember that the New Testament is a result of the world-wide purpose of God in redemption and the efforts of Jesus and his followers to carry out this purpose and that the Old Testament arose from the persistence of Israel's Messianic hope.

We shall accord missions its place of primacy in the program of the Church only as we realize that we are not missionary because of the New Testament; we have the New Testament because the Church of Christ is essentially missionary, because the followers of Christ were fired with his passion. The Church is essentially missionary because of the nature and purpose of the God of the Church. To become truly missionary-minded we must grasp the fact that our missionary obedience does not arise first from the Great Commission, but the Great Commission arises from the purpose of God in Christ and from the sense of missionary obligation which inheres in intelligent Christian experience.

The true Christian, then, is missionary in spirit and in deed, not because there is a "Great Commission," but because the very essence of Christianity is missions. It is because missions is the soul of religion that we have the Great Commission and a great missionary program. It is thus clear that our missionary obligation is not based upon any single text or passage, however strong its missionary implication may be, but in the very nature of our

religion. The nature of our religion springs from the nature of our God. Our God and our religion are revealed in the Bible. Let us, therefore, make a general survey rather than a textual study.

Dr. Horton thus admirably states the purpose of such a study as we are undertaking: "We desire to see the Bible in its natural light, to understand the relation of its parts and the growth through many centuries of its idea. We wish to see it as it is embedded in the life of mankind and as it is related to the religious conceptions and aspirations of men. In making such a survey we expect to discover and to clearly grasp the truth that, as the Book is the authentic and variegated record of the way in which God is gradually but surely revealing himself to the human race, so it is the great and unchangeable means by which that revelation is to cover the whole world and bring all men to the full, clear knowledge of God."

If, as we have contended, God's persistent missionary plan of the ages and the missionary passion of Jesus and his followers produced the Bible, with what reverence and zeal we should approach its study for the missionary message it bears to our day.

Test Questions

1. In projecting a world-wide Program of Missions, why is it necessary to discover the missionary message of the Bible?
2. Give an original definition of missions.
3. Discuss fully the origin of missions.
4. What is the essential basis of the missionary obligation and program?
5. In what respects may the Bible be called the textbook of missions?

CHAPTER II

ISRAEL A MISSIONARY NATION

WHILE God is seen in the Old Testament speaking to men and moving among the nations, and while the universal elements in his love, providence, and mercy are brought out again and again, we are not to expect in the Old Testament that fullness of the revelation of the will and purpose of God which comes through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament was preparatory, pointing in its entire course to Christ. One hardly expects, therefore, to find in the ancient literature of the Hebrews a well-defined missionary purpose. Such a purpose, when regarded as essential in God's plan for the world, is usually thought of as originating in the commands of Jesus. As a matter of fact, however, in the first five books of the Bible, usually called the Pentateuch, we find the record of the beginnings of God's redemptive movement and in the later history of Israel a further development in the life of a mighty nation of a divine plan for the redemption of man, the benefits of which are clearly shown to be for all men everywhere. Studying the Pentateuch in the light of the New Testament, as is now our privilege, we see clearly a missionary significance in God's promise to the ancestors of the Hebrew people and, with equal distinctness, a missionary objective in God's insistent purpose in Israel. There is discernible also an unmistakable missionary implication in the law which the rabbinical interpretation of a later period reduced to a dead and encumbering letter, but which modern scholarship and the New Testament story preserve for us in its proper relation to God's purpose in Israel. The faithfulness of God to this purpose is seen in every subsequent chapter of human history.

I. The Promise of God to Abraham

1. A Promise of Universal Blessing.—God purposed in his heart to extend the benefits of the redemptive scheme to all men everywhere. In working out such a far-reaching program, he needed to begin with a man capable of leading the people, a country in which to test his policies as in a laboratory, a people who might witness to his wisdom and goodness, and a nation through which he could work out his plans and pass the blessings of his grace to oncoming generations. In this great undertaking God had to deal directly with men and nations; so he selected Canaan as the land to be possessed and called Abram to coöperate with him in building a great nation as a channel of blessing to nations unborn.

As God demanded of Abram a complete surrender of his will to the divine will and a giving up of his country, kindred, and home, and commanded him to undertake a long journey with his family and possessions into a far country, he set before him the mighty challenge of great achievement and gave him the sure promise that through him "all families of the earth should be blessed." "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee, will I curse and in thee shall all the *families* of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 1-3.)

Abram must have had a great imagination and a real love of adventure as well as great faith in God. He gathered up his family and possessions and immediately "went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." (Gen. xii. 5.)

In his program for the ages God could look forward to the end, but Abram could not see far ahead. He accepted the plan as worthy of his God. The

promises were indeed inspiring, but Abram could not help but measure the difficulties in the way of a successful outworking of the plan. In the first place, he had no children. He and his wife, Sarai, were both old. This appeared to him an insuperable difficulty. As he journeyed he encountered hardships, family disputations, and famine. He had to go to war against a great king and fight hard battles. A great nation, rich lands, and world-wide influence seemed far away. Thus by numerous trials God was preparing Abram for the supreme test which was yet to come. As from test to test he responded to this tutelage, God encouraged him more and more by special providences, by signal victories, by renewed promises, by established covenants, by the promise that Sarai should bear a son, and by reminding Abram that he, the Almighty God, was the source of his strength.

God began by speaking to Abram of the family and families. (Gen. xii. 3.) At that time it was difficult for Abram to think in terms of a nation. He was accustomed to think of God only in relation to individuals and families. Later God is pushing him out into his bigger plan and talks to him in terms of "many nations." (Gen. xviii. 17, 18.) To help his friend realize the bigness of the scheme, God changed his name from Abram (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude) and bade him call his wife no longer Sarai, but Sarah (princess), for "I shall give thee a son of her, and she shall be a mother of nations." (Read Genesis xvii. 1-6, 15, 16.) Thus God clearly revealed his purpose to set going, through the family of Abraham, influences that should flow unto the ends of the earth. This purpose he repeatedly cemented by promises to Abraham and later on by covenants with Israel.

2. **The Condition of Fulfillment.**—God rested the fulfillment of every promise to Abraham, as also every pledge to Israel, upon obedience. Abram began right. When God called, he promptly gath-

ered his household and possessions and set forth on the long journey. (Gen. xii. 5.) Amid many vicissitudes, hard battles, and sore trials Abraham obeyed God. When the supreme test came he did not hesitate to offer his son. He had the courage to obey because he trusted God. Obedience is more than keeping a few commandments. It is the surrender of the will to God in all things. Abraham had surrendered himself into God's hands. He had found out that he could trust him with his son. Seeing the obedient spirit of his servant, God sent a heavenly messenger to turn again the mind of Abraham to the starry heavens, to stand him again, in imagination, on the sandy seashore, and to deliver to him this message: "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. xxii. 15-18.)

God rests the success of his cause upon the character of his servants. Abraham stood the test. God's cause advanced in his hands. Perhaps the most striking thing about Abraham was his unfaltering faith in the purpose, power, and goodness of God. From this faith sprang his fearless obedience. (Heb. xi. 8-10; Gal. iii. 6.)

Another element of strength in this mighty forbear of Israel was his sense of personal responsibility. When he heard of Sodom's impending doom, he wrestled with God to spare the city. His fitness for a share in God's plan for the nations is seen in his intense local interest and in his sense of personal responsibility for this city of the plains. (Gen. xviii.)

As God's plans slowly unfold, Abraham becomes more and more a factor to be reckoned with, a force to be counted upon, because he feels and prays.

3. **The Ultimate in the Promise.**—God' promise of blessing to Abraham, and through him to Israel, was not an end in itself, but the means to the greater end that God might open a channel of blessing to all mankind. Abraham to the very end of his days rightly interpreted the providences of God and wisely adjusted himself to God's plans. Unfortunately, in later times, Israel grew to feel that God's gracious providences were marks of special favoritism. On the contrary, God was ever careful to keep the ultimate reaches of his purpose linked up close with his promises and providences. In every promise to Abraham the ultimate, the far-reaching objective was kept in view. "I will bless thee . . . and thou shalt be a blessing . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed; . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Not only in his promises to Abraham and in his providential leading of Israel to the end that a Saviour may be born do we see the ultimate design of a merciful God; but in his dealings with all outstanding personalities of the Book and running through the cycles of human history we see God's unchanging purpose to make great men and mighty nations in all ages contribute to his purpose to redeem the whole world.

II. God's World-Wide Purpose in Israel

1. **A Ministering Nation.**—God's purpose was to prepare Israel for a holy mission. "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" is expressive of God's high purpose for his people, Israel. As a reward of obedence he will make of them a holy nation of ministering people. As the man of God ministers to his neighbor, man to man, in holy things, so God plans to have a holy nation minister to other nations, nation to nation, in the things of God. The

building of a kingdom of ministers—working together with God—is the task God sets for himself.

Again we see that God rests his proposal of divine favor to Israel upon the willingness and ability of the people to keep his commandments. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples." (Ex. xix. 5a.) God's bestowal of divine blessing upon Israel is not a special favor, but must be regarded as the reward of obedience and as a means to an end. God's blessing upon Israel must never be regarded as an end in itself. Israel's sin and folly lay in the fact that she came so to regard it.

All of God's purposes, promises, and providences affecting Israel are the means to the greater end that the blessing of divine grace may flow through Israel unto the ends of the earth. Rearing the tribes of Jacob, building a mighty nation, preserving a single race were not the primary tasks Jehovah had set for his people. The mission he proposed for Israel was far greater. Though Israel did not realize it, the Gentile races and the ends of the earth were in the range of his thinking: "Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. . . . It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isa. xlix. 3, 6.)

From the vantage ground of the New Testament, in which the Old Testament issues, we are able with confidence to interpret the providences of God in the history of his ancient people.

2. **Saved to Serve.**—In the plan of Jehovah, Israel is to serve all nations. God will tolerate no opposition from without. Pharaoh is standing across God's plan; so Egypt's host goes down before God's "kingdom of priests," God's "holy nation." As Israel faced the Great Sea and Pharaoh's army pressed

from the rear, fear fell upon the people; then "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Ex. xiv. 13, 14.) The strategy of God was brought into play and his people saved thereby from destruction. We must remember, however, that the strength of God's arm is bared for the deliverance of his people only when his people hear his voice and obey him.

God said to Abraham: "Get thee into a land that I shall show thee." Had Abraham gone in any other direction, God's purpose could never have been accomplished through him. There was a plan and a place involved in the fulfillment of the mission of Abraham's descendants. In the place selected there was a point of special advantage which must not be overlooked.

3. **A Vantage Ground.**—About the ancient Hebrew people lay great nations—the Egyptians, Hittites, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, and the more distant peoples of India and China. Later came the Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Were not these in mind when God spoke to Abraham of "all families of the earth"? The land of the Hebrews was only one hundred and fifty miles long and one hundred miles wide; yet this land lay along the highway of the world's trade and travel from east to west and from north to south. In this point of vantage, then, his people should be established as a witness unto the true God. Heathen faiths and false gods flourished in the lands about them. "Hitherto the Hebrew people had been more or less isolated while busy developing their own national and religious life. Events conspired to prevent Israel becoming a great world power politically; so God threw her into the 'tempestuous stream' of the ancient world with a 'message for humanity.' It is

the message of the true God. 'Ye are my witnesses, my servant whom I have chosen. . . . There was no strange god among you; therefore, ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah.'"

The point of vantage was not given to Israel, but was won by conquest under the leadership of Joshua, a prince of the tribe of Ephraim, born in Egypt, selected by Moses as his chief of staff, and trained for great tasks. At Moses's death God called Joshua to take up the work Moses laid down. (Josh. i.) Moses falls, but God's purpose runs on through the ages. Thus Israel starts across the Jordan to win the promised land under a great leader called of God to his task. In all the long, hard struggle Joshua is sustained by God's promise to match his courage and faithfulness with divine favor and support.

4. **Providential Leading.**—Ultimately Israel is established in the land and finds herself God's chosen people in the midst of the nations. During her wilderness experience Israel received from God, in reward for obedience, food, raiment, shelter, and guidance, and the blessings of physical fitness for the long, long journey. When Israel forgot God, God remembered Israel, to correct and guide her into the ways of obedience. Now he holds before her as a challenge to faithfulness the remembrance of past blessings and the bountiful benefactions of the promised land yet to be won. (Deut. viii. 1-11.) In this challenge God sets before Israel the contrast between the recent hardships and trials of the wilderness and the rich abundance of Canaan. It is a searching reminder of Israel's inescapable obligation.

"We must bear in mind that the history of God's chosen people had a distinctly prophetic character looking onward and leading up to the grand consummation of God's purpose for mankind in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ and the foundation of his Church—the true spiritual Israel." (Edmund Venables.)

5. **God's Plan Interpreted.**—The early Church

leaders saw in the history of God's dealing with Israel a world-wide movement. Peter, in his appeal to the descendants of Abraham, says: "Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the earth be blessed." Paul, writing to the Galatians, indicates clearly his interpretation of the ancient promises: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed."

III. An Argument for Missions in the Law

Running through the Book of the Covenant, the Book of the Law, and the Law of Holiness, we find that Israel is directed to give special consideration to foreigners in relation to their social contacts, religious observance, and moral life, and that Israel is strictly required to administer justice and to meet the physical necessities of the foreigners in their midst. For example, note the following from the Book of the Covenant:* "And a foreigner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him; for ye were foreigners in the land of Egypt." (Ex. xxii. 21.) "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the foreigner may be refreshed." (Ex. xxiii. 12.) From the Book of the Law: "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the foreigner that is with him." (Deut. i. 16.) "Love ye therefore the foreigner; for ye were foreigners in the land of Egypt." (Deut. x. 19.) "And

*The terms "stranger" and "sojourner" mean "foreigner." The facts in the case and the context in each instance cited indicate that these words are used as synonyms, so we translate the word "foreigner," as it is the term we should ues to-day and brings out the real meaning.

the Levite, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the foreigner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Jehovah thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest." (Deut. xiv. 29.) "And thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the foreigner and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there." (Deut. xvi. 11.) "Your little ones, your wives, and thy foreigner that is in the midst of thy camps, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou mayest enter into the covenant of Jehovah, thy God, and into his oath, which Jehovah thy God maketh with thee this day." (Deut. xxix. 11, 12.) "Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones, and thy foreigner that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law." (Deut. xxxi. 12.) From the Law of Holiness: "Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the foreigner, as for the homeborn; for I am Jehovah your God." (Lev. xxiv. 22.) "Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the homeborn, nor the foreigner that sojourneth among you." (Lev. xviii. 26.) "But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you." (Lev. xxii. 20.) "And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him; as well the foreigner, as the homeborn, when he blasphemeth the name of Jehovah shall be put to death." (Lev. xxiv. 16.) "And it shall be a statute for ever unto you; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner

of work, the homeborn, or the foreigner that sojourneth among you: for on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before Jehovah. It is a sabbath of solemn rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; it is a statute for ever." (Lev. xvi. 29-31.)

IV. Nations Serving God

"Jehovah's choice of Israel in the first instance involved a call to occupy a special position in relation to himself, to be and to be acknowledged before the world as his peculiar people. And this position of privilege involved a special responsibility toward God and toward the rest of mankind. On the one side, they were the trustees of God's glory in the world, 'his witnesses,' 'the people which he formed for himself, to show forth his praise.' On the other, they were the heirs of the promise made at the call of the father of the elect, that 'in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed.' And this work for others is the characteristic function of the ideal 'Servant of the Lord,' who embodies in himself all that is most characteristic of the chosen Israel." (Murray.)

God's purpose to bestow the blessings of salvation upon all nations is as clear and persistent in his dealing with men and nations to-day as when he talked with Abraham and established covenant relation with Israel. As aforetime, so now, God's love is world-encompassing, his redemptive purpose all-inclusive. God is still able. He is still persistent. We need as individuals a greater faith in his ability and purpose. As a nation, we need a deeper sense of national obligation to God and his world, a faith great enough to make us obedient to every providential summons to sacrificial service.

We find it easy to think in terms of individualism and of personal testimony to the truth of our religion. What God strove to bring Israel to experience we

need to see and understand; namely, that God needs ministering nations and peoples as witnesses to the saving power of his grace.

Emerson once said: "America looks like the last effort of Divine Providence in behalf of the human race." Every epoch in our history, every circumstance of our day, seems to indicate that God is seeking to make of America a ministering nation, a "kingdom of priests," with a ministry of peace and brotherly love to the turbulent, hating, warring peoples of our modern world. Can God's plan for America be realized, or shall selfish interests and narrow nationalism dash his cherished plan to the ground?

Test Questions

1. What missionary significance may be found in God's promise to Abraham?
2. Enumerate some of the difficulties that Abraham had to contend with that called for a vital faith in God.
3. Give a difinition of true obedience.
4. In what respect were the Hebrews God's chosen people?
5. What constitutes the greatest tragedy of the Hebrew race?
6. Discuss the strategic importance of Palestine.
7. What convincing missionary implications may be found in the Pentateuch?

CHAPTER III

THE MISSIONARY VISION OF THE PROPHETS

THE world of the prophets, who began to speak for God in the eighth century before Christ, included Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Phœnicia, Israel, and Judah. It was a divided, warring world of separate petty clans with diverse aims and conflicting interests. Each clan had its own national deity which it "employed rather than worshiped, and each of these tribal deities was considered to be merely one among many gods with power limited to its own territory." These nations or petty clans, continually contending for national supremacy and for the superiority of their religion, produced crises in the affairs of the world and consequently in the life of Israel. It was usually in the midst of these crises that the prophets spoke. Their thoughts were often put into writing, much of which has come down to us.

Prior to the prophetic era the Hebrew people had for centuries concentrated their attention upon themselves in order to uproot idolatry and to develop the true worship of Jehovah. "But now they are thrown irresistibly into the great world drama which is going on around them." In this tense situation the prophets denounce vices, warn Israel against disobedience, call her to maintain God's one standard of righteousness for the world, and exhort Israel to be faithful to Jehovah in all things because of her obligation to the nations.

The penalties which were threatened should Israel fail Jehovah were dark and disastrous beyond measure. Nevertheless "all the seers of Israel look forward out of their present, whether gloomy or bright, to a golden age of peace."

A survey of the prophetic utterances which have been preserved for us in the Bible discloses the fact

that through all there runs Israel's Messianic hope, strong and deep, like the tide flowing through the channel out to sea. It is not always easy to discern the missionary movement in the floods of prophetic utterance as they were poured out through the centuries. Yet if we look for the currents of Hebrew history and sound for the depth of their providential meaning, surveying all in the light of the New Testament, we are able to see clearly that in Israel's Messianic hope and in the glory and extent of the kingdom foretold there is a missionary message of profound significance.

Whether we study the words of the early prophets, Elijah, Amos, and Hosea, or the Messianic hope voiced in the time of Isaiah, we find a missionary message in God's announced purpose in Israel and in his love and purpose which, reaching beyond Israel, seeks to bless all men. If we study the ideals involved in the Messianic Hope during the period of the exile or follow the prophetic utterances of the postexilic period, we find the Messiah's kingdom of righteousness and peace confidently foretold and in the prophecies a universal human message.

Instead of taking up our study period by period, let us survey the whole field of prophecy for those outstanding elements which indicate the wider purpose of God than lies on the surface of Israel's history. Pursuing this method, we find:

I. God's Care Universal

God's care for other peoples as well as for Israel was proclaimed by the prophets. Let us hear Amos. He is said to "travel the path all later prophecy follows." Hence he gives us the key for an interpretation of the early prophets. The significance of the whole book of Amos is found in Amos ix.: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopian unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"

(Read Amos ix. 8-15.) The prophet here diplomatically denounces the sins of Israel's enemies and then the sins of Israel. Then in order to awaken Israel to her responsibility he strongly asserts that Jehovah cares for other nations as he cares for Israel. Throwing himself squarely against the selfish conceit and narrow nationalism of Israel, he boldly establishes in the soul of prophecy the thought of God's universal love and care. This consciousness is essential to an interpretation of God in terms of his purpose for the world as seen in ancient or modern times. It is the genius of missions. "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." (Hos. ii. 23. Read Hosea ii. 19-23.) "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold I will lift up my hand to the nations, and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in their bosom, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." (Isa. xlix. 22.)

II. Salvation Is for Gentile

The story of Jonah forcibly illustrates this fact. It has been justly called "a foreign-missionary book in the midst of the Old Testament; a divine anticipation of the breaking down of barriers in the announcement of salvation." (Bissell.) Its character is fixed by the fact that Jonah acted, in his final obedience, upon the belief that Jehovah is the God of the Gentiles also. So he preached repentance and salvation to Nineveh, the great Assyrian capital on the banks of the Tigris. Jonah is represented as the first to proclaim this truth, and he did it unwillingly. In this he was true to his nationalistic instinct and sense of racial superiority.

The record of Jonah's mission to Nineveh was doubtless intended as a reproof and warning to the chosen people of God at a time of great crisis in their history. Here was a heathen city repenting and

heeding God's call under the preaching of a prophet of a hated race. But Israel, favored of God, enriched by his blessings, guided by his counsel, shielded by his strength, and sustained by his promise, had long turned a deaf ear to his call and was reluctant to repent. God wanted Israel to know that he cared for Nineveh. "And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. . . . And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." (Jonah iii. 1, 2, 5. Read the book of Jonah.)

The inclusion of the Gentiles is seen not only in the story of Jonah's trip to Nineveh, but in some of the most eloquent deliverances of the great prophets as they describe the coming Messiah and the glory of his reign. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek." (Isa. xi. 10a.) "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles." (Isa. xlii. 1.) "Then thou shalt see and be radiant, and thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee." (Isa. lx. 5.) "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Mal. i. 11.)

III. Israel a Servant of God

Israel is chosen as a servant to transmit the Light of God to a darkened world. The great prophet Isaiah foretells the abundant turning of the Gentiles

to God on condition that Israel will release the light of God which has come to her. Isaiah points to the great darkness encompassing the Gentile world and to the light which has come to Israel. Thus the course of duty is made plain. "Light is the usual emblem of happiness and darkness of affliction. Hence Jerusalem is bade to arise and give light to all about her." Because of the gross darkness settling upon the earth, it is the high duty of the people of God to share with the heathen the light of the glory of God which has come upon them. By this means, declares the prophet, shall be effected the conversion of the Gentiles. In this message he not only foretells the abundant access of the Gentiles but draws, in graphic outline, the movement of the Gentile world into the kingdom of God. This he does to emphasize the obligation of Israel as a nation receiving light from God to bear it to the nations in darkness. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. lx. 1-3. Read Isaiah lx. 1-14.)

That Israel was slow to learn—indeed, never did learn fully—the real purpose of God in her history is sad, but does not obscure the definite purpose in the divine call to Israel; and though Israel so often failed, yet we see God's purpose persistently pursuing its way toward a well-defined end. "I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." (Isa. xlii. 6, 7.) "Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the

Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isa. xlix. 6.) "And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. lx. 3.) "And I will set a sign among them, and I will send such as escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations." (Isa. lxvi. 19.) "O Jehovah, my strength, and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of affliction, unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth." (Jer. xvi. 19.)

IV. The Kingdom Foretold

The coming of Messiah's kingdom of righteousness and peace is confidently foretold. The Messianic hope shines brightest perhaps in the time of Isaiah. The great prophet delivers a fearful arraignment of Israel and of Judah, denounces their sins, appeals to the people to reform, and warns them of impending punishment. The present plight of the chosen people of God demanded his scathing words and searching appeal. "Beyond the present, however, there loomed before the prophet the outcome of the affairs of history and the purpose of God."

From the vantage ground of the New Testament in which the Old Testament issues, we are able to interpret currents of human history and the providences of God in dealing with his ancient people. We are therefore able to read with new understanding the words of the prophets of old: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with

righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) "Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles, . . . and in his name shall all the Gentiles hope." (Matt. xii. 18, 21.) Israel lived and developed and was trained and disciplined in order to bring forth Christ the Redeemer. "Israel existed to produce Christ as the bulb exists to produce the hyacinth."

The government that shall rest upon the shoulders of the "Mighty God" shall be a government in righteousness and equity. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins." (Isa. xi. 4, 5.) Its administration shall usher in an era of brotherly love and peace. "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." (Isa. xi. 6.) "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 9.) In his appeal to the imagination, the prophet here draws his illustration from types of incompatible animal nature well known to his hearers. Thus he renders wondrously vivid the striking scenes of peace and good will which are to appear when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God.

No program of human betterment which leaves God out can harmonize the violently contending elements in human nature. It is true, however, that a knowledge of God's thought for the world is embodied in the "fruitful branch" of the "stock of Jesse," and life projected in harmony with his philos-

ophy is sufficient to effect a complete transformation of human society. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice. And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land." (Isa. xxxii. 1, 2.)

That the Messiah of God shall reign is clearly in the thought of the great prophet, for he makes the ruler to say: "The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God: to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified." (Isa. lxi. 1-3. Compare with Luke iv. 18, 19.)

This kingdom of Messiah shall be peaceful and universal. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." (Zech. ix. 9, 10.) "And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.) The picture of a king riding not upon a war horse but making his triumphal entry upon the beast of peaceful toil, the ass, is indicative of the passing of war and the triumphs of peace. (Compare Matthew xxi. 1-11.)

The outreach of his dominion is proclaimed as ex-

tending to the ends of the earth. More and more the later prophetism deals with the perfect rule of Jehovah, wherein the foreigner is included (Zech. xiv. 6); when Jehovah is king over all the earth (Zech. xiv. 9); when the curse shall pass (Zech. xiv. 11), and when "the horse is not merely displaced by the ass as in Zechariah ix. 9, but is himself transformed from an instrument of war into a proclaimer of the holiness of Jehovah. (Zech. xiv. 20.) See Frank Seay's "Studies in the Prophets," page 108.

How wonderfully Micah portrays the setting up above the warring government of the earth Jehovah's peaceful government in which war and strife are superseded by brotherly fellowship and fruitful toil! "But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it. For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever. In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble that which is lame, and I will gather that which is driven away, and that which I have afflicted; and I will make that which was lame a remnant, and that which was cast far off a strong nation: and Jehovah will reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth even for ever." (Mic. iv. 1-7.)

At last we come to Daniel, who, in his apocalyptic vision, describes the kingdom of God and proceeds to interpret it as the kingdom of the Most High which shall be forever and ever: "But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." (Dan. vii. 18. Read Daniel vii. 9-18.)

V. A Universal Message

1. **The Prophecies Are a Universal Human Message.**—Isaiah sends the call of God down the ages and to the ends of the earth. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." (Isa. xlv. 22, 23.) Israel in God's program for the world is set to transmit the message of salvation unto the ends of the earth. "Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." (Isa. xlix. 6.) God's arm is bared not only as revealing strength for Israel, but as the guarantee of deliverance for all men. "Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." (Isa. lii. 10.)

2. **Foreigners Are to Share in the Salvation of God.**—(Read Isaiah lvi. 1-8.) With a burning eloquence, the prophet, with the promise of Messiah who shall deliver and reign, calls to faith and repentance: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. lv. 1.) International fellowship is foretold: "In that day shall there

be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." (Isa. xix. 23-25.) In drawing this picture of highways of communication between Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, and in describing a triple alliance of these nations, hitherto bitter enemies, the prophet prefigures international fellowship and free intercommunication of Christian nations in the days of the new kingdom: "Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 22, 23.)

3. **The Promise of God's Visitation Is Universal.** —"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." (Joel ii. 28, 29.)

Surveying the prophetic utterances of the greater and lesser prophets of Israel, we see clearly the world-encompassing redemptive purpose of God unfolding from age to age and moving forward, in the face of insuperable difficulties, toward its consummation. We see the faithfulness of God in the unalterableness of his purpose, the mercy and justice of God in certainty of rewards and punishments, the majesty and glory of God in the pictures of the perfect peace and permanent prosperity of the reign of Christ. We feel a new sense of identification with God's program,

for we discover that it is still in process of working out and that now, as in ages gone, God relies upon human witnesses and coöperates with faithful men in all ages.

Test Questions

1. Give a brief summary of Israel's Messianic hope.
2. What missionary message may be found in the book of Amos?
3. Why is the book of Jonah called the greatest foreign mission book of the Old Testament?
4. Summarize the missionary message of Isaiah.
5. Show how the world-encompassing redemptive purpose of God reaches its highest point of development in the Old Testament in the utterances of the prophet.

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE OF THE PSALMS

THE Psalter is the hymn book of Israel. It grew, as any such collection grows, the product of many periods and many pens. The majority of these poems and songs are ascribed to David, others to Asaph, and the authorship of many is unknown. Naturally then there is noticeable variation in form, content, and spiritual level. Nevertheless, there runs through the whole collection, like a melody, "the lyric expressions of true prophetic spirits." "Poetry was the handmaid of prophecy in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. Prophetic ideas are taken up, developed, pressed to their full consequences, with the boldness and enthusiasm of inspired imagination. The constant use of the Psalms for devotion and worship familiarized the people with them. Expectation was aroused and kept alive. Hope became part of the national life." (Cambridge Bible.) The Psalms at once reflect and keep alive the Messianic hope.

The Psalter may be called the liturgy of the Jewish Church. While intercession for people beyond Israel is wanting, and while the Psalms are not "missionary" in the sense that they present a missionary program or command personal missionary endeavor, nevertheless the Psalter is rich in missionary meaning. This is particularly true of those psalms which helped to prepare for the coming of Christ, for they bear witness to the unity of God's plan which is being wrought out through the ages. It is in their contribution to the Messianic hope of Israel and in their unique spiritual ministry to the souls of men in all ages that we find the missionary message of the Psalms. We have space to discuss but four of the outstanding missionary elements in the Psalter.

I. The Messianic Kingdom Forecast

1. **The Kingdom Anticipated.**—In a survey of the Psalms we find "a constant anticipation of a King who shall reign in righteousness and of a kingdom that shall reach to the uttermost ends of the earth."

In Psalm sixty-seven the singers lead the congregation in an exhortation to the nations to praise God. The basis of this exhortation is confidence in the universality of God's judgment and government. (Verse 4.) God's righteous judgment and just government of the nations, accepted with praise and thanksgiving by all people, is the signal for universal peace and prosperity and the guarantee of spiritual blessing and the extension of the fear of God to the ends of the earth. (Verses 5-7.)

The reign of the righteous King and the reach of his kingdom to the ends of the earth constitute the theme of numerous passages of the Psalter. In all the stateliness and splendor of their worship we hear Israel sing: "For Jehovah most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth. . . . For God is the King of all the earth: Sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the nations: God sitteth upon his holy throne." (Ps. xlvii. 2, 7, 8.) "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He will judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice. . . . He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall render tribute: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." (Ps. lxxii. 1, 2, 8-11.) "So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth thy glory." (Ps. cii. 15.) "All the kings of the earth shall give thee thanks, O Jehovah, for they have heard the words of thy mouth." (Ps. cxxxviii. 4.)

2. **An Exhortation to All Nations.**—We find also a constant exhortation to all nations to render homage to God because of the power, providence, goodness, and grace of his universal reign: "Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands. Serve Jehovah with gladness; come before his presence with singing." (Ps. c. 1, 2.) "O sing unto Jehovah a new song; sing unto Jehovah, all the earth. . . . Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples. . . . O worship Jehovah in holy array. Tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, Jehovah reigneth. The world also is established that it cannot be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; let the field exult and all that is therein. Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy before Jehovah; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth." (Ps. xcvi. 1, 3, 9-13.) "Jehovah reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad." (Ps. xcviii. 1.)

3. **A Universal Call.**—A universal call to praise God for a world-encompassing salvation is sounded abroad: "O sing unto Jehovah a new song. For he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath wrought salvation for him. Jehovah hath made known his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the nations. . . . All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all the earth: break forth and sing for joy, yea, sing praises." (Ps. xcviii. 1, 2, 3b, 4.) "O come, let us sing unto Jehovah; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." (Ps. xcv. 1, 2.)

4. **The Nations Will Worship Jehovah.**—That the nations will worship Jehovah is confidently de-

clared: "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name." (Ps. lxvi. 4.) "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and they shall glorify thy name." (Ps. lxxxvi. 9.)

II. The Turning of the Nations to God Is Foreseen

"All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee: for the kingdom is Jehovah's, and he is the ruler over the nations." (Ps. xxii. 27, 28.) In the light of this expectation it is exceedingly interesting to note that the Psalmist impersonates the Lord and delivers a challenge that is unmistakable in its import. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii. 8.) Then the Psalmist impersonates Israel and answers the Lord's challenge: "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." (Ps. lxv. 2. Read John xii. 32.) "So the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. . . . When the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah." (Ps. cii. 15, 22.) "Jehovah reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad." (Ps. xcvii. 1.) "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth." (Ps. lxxii. 8.)

Such passages cannot possibly refer to a temporal sovereignty of Israel over the nations of the earth. It is clearly a prophecy of the reign of God's Messiah. "The King of whom Israel sings is more God than man, and the dominion which is promised to him is humanity rather than Israel."

"No feature is more striking in the Psalms than the unquestioning and natural directness with which they embrace the heathen, the nations, as equally included with Israel in the purposes, and the kingdom of God." (Dean R. W. Church.)

III. Israel Is an Instrument of God

Israel is regarded as the people of God, through whom, by his providence and discipline, all men shall come to know and fear the Lord. God's ownership of Israel is acknowledged in such songs as: "Know ye that Jehovah, he is God; it is he that hath made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Ps. c. 3.) "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever; we will show forth thy praise to all generations." (Ps. lxxix. 13.) "In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." (Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2. Read Palms xcv. 7; lxxx. 1) The story of God's providential leading of Israel and the bounty of his blessing is thus recited: "Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." (Ps. lxxvii. 20.) "And he led them safely, so that they feared not." (Ps. lxxviii. 53a.) "Praise ye Jehovah; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely. Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem; he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." (Ps. cxlvii. 1, 2.) "Praise Jehovah, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee; he maketh peace in thy borders; he filleth thee with the finest of the wheat." (Ps. cxlvii. 12-14. Read Psalms lxxviii.)

The end in view—the coming of all nations to know and worship Jehovah—is kept fresh in Israel's anticipations by such sentiments as these: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and they shall glorify thy name." (Ps. lxxxvi. 9.) "All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name." (Ps. lxvi. 4.) "O God of our salvation, thou art the confidence of all the ends of the earth." (Ps. lxv. 5b.) "As is thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth." (Ps. xlviii. 10a.)

IV. The Psalter the Property of the World

The very character of its influence makes the Psalter the property not of a nation, but of the world.

1. **Answers Human Need.**—The Psalms meet a universal need. It is almost unbelievable how the Psalms satisfy the yearning of the human heart to express itself to God, and how they comfort the troubled soul of man, no matter of what race or clime or of what age in the history of mankind. Israel's sense of Jehovah reached its most perfect realization in the assembly of the people for worship when the choral choir voiced the noble sentiments of the Psalms to orchestral accompaniment. The Christian Church from the beginning until now has reached its loftiest heights of devotional experience in singing psalms of praise and thanksgiving. The naked savage of Central Africa, lifted by the power of Christ from the depths of ignorance, superstition, and crime, soon learns to pour out his heart to God in the words of the Psalmist. The silken-gowned scholar of China, through whose prejudice and hate the gospel light has broken, soon expresses deepest emotions of gratitude and love in the words of the sweet Singer of Israel.

As David in the long ago, befouled by sin, sensible that evil reigned within and wretched through the consciousness of wrongdoing, cried to God for forgiveness and cleansing, so to-day the sinner under conviction cries to God: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. li. 1, 2, 7, 10.) As David in the long ago yearned to praise God worthily, sought to be acceptable in God's sight, and expressed his confidence in

salvation from God, so to-day God's children in confidence seek his face and favor: "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." (Ps. li. 15.) "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock, and my redeemer." (Ps. xix. 14.) "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps. xxvii. 1.) As David in the long ago found comfort in Jehovah, so to-day we find comfort in the reality of our God: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. . . . Jehovah of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Ps. xlvi. 1, 7.) Thus we see that the passionate longings of the human soul voiced by Israel's poets and hymnists of old awaken to-day a perfect response in the human heart and meet, now as then, a universal need of man.

When we compare the psalms of Israel with numerous ancient collections of noble hymns, such as the Veda and Homeric hymns, or with ordinary poetry, we find that they move upon a much higher plane, having both universal and everlasting elements. This explains why they are used wherever Christianity goes, and the lack of these elements explains why the Veda and the Homeric hymns have small places in the literature of the nations. There is here, we think, evidence of the supernatural voice which sounds in the Psalter. "Whoever were the human authors of the Psalter, the real author was the Spirit of God."

Realizing that the poetry of no other race or age is so translatable or carries a message so universal in its adaptation and blessing, we are prepared to appreciate what Dr. Horton has so well said: "The missionary character of the Psalter lies not only in its forecast of the Messianic kingdom and of the turning of the nations to God, not only in its insistence upon God's purpose to bless all men through Israel, but much more in the fullness, the richness,

and the beauty with which it delineates both the deepest experiences and the most transient moods of the human soul in its relation with God. It would have been inconceivable beforehand how hymns could have been written in Judaism, to be sung in Christendom; how the songs of the temple which was to be destroyed could be suitable to the temple not made with hands; how a community which was thinking only of its exclusive privileges and of its superiority to the other nations of the world could unconsciously forecast a holy King, to whom all the nations of the heathen should be given, and compose the grateful praises in which a ransomed humanity would join. But that inconceivable possibility is precisely the miracle which is realized in the Psalms, and the missionary significance of it must be plain as soon as it is pointed out."

2. **The Spiritual Message.**—The consistent spiritual message of the Psalms is felt throughout and is missionary in all its implications. Let us picture a scene in the synagogue, a great choir, robed and trained, with choir leader and orchestra, divided into two parts, the one on the east and the other on the west side of the assembly. One choir sings: "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us." (Ps. lxvii. 1.) The other choir answers: "That thy ways may be known upon the earth, thy salvation among all heathen." (Verse 2.) Thus throughout the stately hymn is sung, choir answering choir, in the melodies of grand orchestral music. From stanza to stanza the theme moves forward to the climax of prophetic hope. "All nations of the earth shall fear him."

Here is revealed the true motive in all our praying and serving: Be merciful to us, that we may show mercy to others. Let the light of salvation shine upon us, that we may save others. This is a principle of action fundamental in God's dealing with man. He blesses that we may bless. He gives to the end that we may share the gifts with others. A

study of God's process in dealing with man reveals his motives and the ends in view in the administration of his providence and grace. A long-suffering God is merciful to man that man may be merciful to his fellows, and a God of loving-kindness blesses man that he in turn may be a blessing to mankind. A God of power and grace saves man from the consequence of his own sins that he may carry the news of salvation to others.

The primary end in view, therefore, in God's bestowal of mercy, blessing, or salvation upon Israel, or upon America, is that the benefits of God's mercy, blessing, and salvation may be extended to all men everywhere. The human messenger, with an experience to relate or a testimony to bear, is God's method of extending the knowledge of salvation throughout the world. Clearly the benefits are bestowed to be passed on.

God does not grant the blessings of peace and prosperity to a people that they may utilize them for themselves alone. Folly and disaster are sure to attend such a course. We realize that the world was recently plunged into war and bloodshed because nations selfishly sought commercial advantage and political dominance. Such a spirit is at variance with God's program for the nations. The Psalmist interprets to us the motive that wins. There is in this psalm a strong implication that selfish prayers are never answered. A motive of unselfish service, of sincere longing to bless others, of earnest desire to help save the world is necessary if our petitions are to have an answer.

How glorious it would be if the Christian peoples of the twentieth century could pray in the spirit of this great prayer of Israel! (Read Psalms lxvii.) Let us try to imagine the effect, if the French would cry unto God, "Be merciful unto us, that we may be merciful"; if the Germans would pray, "Judge the people with equity, that we may learn to deal equitably"; if Americans would pray, "God be

merciful unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations." (Ps. lxvii. 1, 2.) How quickly order would be restored in war-torn Europe! How speedily light would illumine the whole world!

Is it not significant that the Psalter ends with the chorus of universal praise from every living thing? "Praise ye Jehovah. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with trumpet sound: praise him with psaltery and harp. Praise him with timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise him with loud cymbals: praise him with high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah. Praise ye Jehovah." (Ps. cl.)

3. **The Answer to a Troubled World.**—There is but one basis of optimism for the man who faces squarely the perils of bitterness, competition, hate, and strife of our modern world. That basis is faith in the missionary message that runs through the Bible from beginning to end, the sure promise that the Lord's anointed shall reign in righteousness over the nations and that his salvation shall reach unto the ends of the earth. It is our privilege and responsibility to help promote the knowledge of God, the ideals of Jesus, and the life abundant which he brings to man.

Test Questions

1. Discuss the growth of the Psalter.
2. Name three outstanding missionary truths that are predominant in the Psalms.
3. What part does music play in a universal religion?
4. Explain fully the missionary significance of Psalm lxvii.
5. In surveying the present world order, do you think that the "sole basis for optimism" is to be found in the Christian religion? Justify your answer.

CHAPTER V

THE BURDEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

If the student comes to a study of the New Testament with an open mind, a survey of the four Gospels will lead him to a wonderful man who delivers a wonderful message. The Man, though a Jew, thinks of himself in world terms; and the message, though delivered to the Jews, is characterized by universal elements and declared to be for all men.

A study of the Acts of the Apostles discloses the "first, fine, careless rapture" in which the early Church set forth to proclaim the message of the Man to the whole wide world and the matchless devotion and courage with which the heroes of the cross persisted in their sacrificial ministry.

The Epistles exhibit the patient faith and sound wisdom with which the Church, planted in the midst of heathenism, was trained and guided in the way of life as set forth in the message of the man Jesus.

I. A Message Brought by a Man

Such a survey reveals unmistakably that the burden of the New Testament is a message brought by a man called Jesus. The character of the message is simple and clear.

1. It Is the Good News of Salvation.—The Lord's messenger comforted the troubled heart of Joseph with these words regarding the promised babe: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. i. 20, 21.) The angel reassured the affrighted shepherds of Judea on the night of the advent by speaking to them in the

quiet of the dawn: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people, for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke ii. 10, 11.) "I bring *you*" suggests that the message is to the individual. "Which shall be to all the people" suggests the universal scope of the "good tidings." The whole message is epitomized in John iii. 16, 17: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." Paul the great apostle, in the exaltation of great triumph as he presses westward with the good news, declares: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. i. 16.)

It is the "Good News" of salvation for man, for all of a man, body, mind and soul; and for all men, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned. It is salvation from sin to a new life of righteousness, from selfishness and self-indulgence to self-sacrifice and unselfish service. It is the good news of salvation for the individual, for society, and for the nations. We have only to follow through the pages of the Book to see how truly so great and so far-reaching a salvation is offered in Christ Jesus.

2. **It Is the Good News of a New Kingdom.**—"The message in its briefest form runs: 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' Look at that sentence with fresh eyes unencumbered by any explanations except those which the New Testament contains, and you can hardly fail to catch its meaning. God is King and all men are his subjects, so that they can find no happiness or worth except in complete obedience to his will; and thus their prayer must daily be that his rights may be acknowledged, his sovereignty ac-

cepted, and his purpose realized in every detail of the world's life." (Read Matthew iv. 17, vi. 10; Romans x. 13, 15.) It is truly said of the man Jesus who brought the good news of the new kingdom: "Never man spake like this man," "for he taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes." (John vii. 46; Matt. vii. 29.) This Jesus, the people's prophet in the days of his flesh, unfolded his vision of a new kingdom (or age) and the way to prepare for it.

Visualizing that kingdom through the eyes of Jesus, we see a new kingdom in which disease and demons give way; we see how strongly the teachings and influence of Jesus are thrown against these enemies of man's body and soul. It is wonderful how the foes of man's body, mind, and soul are routed when Jesus is let into an individual life or into human civilization. The marvelous progress of medical science, the wonderful healing ministry of the missionary physician, the mastery of malaria and yellow fever in Panama and Cuba through the application of modern science, and the discovery of vaccines and antitoxins are but suggestions of what was in the mind of Jesus as he "went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt. iv. 23, 24.)

These developments in modern science suggest also what was in Jesus's mind when he "called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure disease, and he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke ix. 1, 2); and when he sent forth the seventy, two and two, in a house-to-house visitation, to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to heal the sick. (Read Luke x. 9.)

We see a new kingdom-of-God civilization growing out of the Beatitudes—"the humble in spirit," "they that mourn," "the meek," "they that hunger and thirst after righteousness," "the merciful," "the

pure in heart," "the peacemakers." Could we picture the lust for power, the greed for gold, the bitterness, hate, and bloodshed of the recent war springing from a civilization which had been builded by the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers? Could we imagine one nation builded by those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and who practice these kingdom virtues surviving in the midst of nations which are gluttonous for gold and which lust for power? Jesus's kingdom ideals must become universal, or the nations which adopt them will be destroyed. As a hawk devours the sparrow, so would the godless nations devour the peacemakers. This new kingdom civilization must spread over the earth, or every promise and prophecy of its coming and triumph shall fail. The people who can furnish the ideals of this new kingdom are called "the salt of the earth and the light of the world." (Read Matthew v. 1-16.)

We see a kingdom in which there is no contempt for man nor lust for woman (Matt. v. 21-24, 27, 28, 31, 32); a kingdom of plain speech and no revenge (Matt. v. 33, 49); in which care is taken of the neighbor in need (Luke x. 25-37). The story of the good Samaritan indicates very clearly that my neighbor is the man in need, whose need is made known to me, and at a time when I am in position to render aid.

We see a kingdom in which the citizens trust in God without nervous worry. (Matt. vi. 30, 34.) It is suggested that the cause of worry is a lack of faith, and that a childlike trust in our Heavenly Father and the redeeming grace of Christ the Lord should cure all carking care and disturbing worry. We see a kingdom in which material wealth is subordinated to spiritual experience, in which the entrancing treasures are shares in the eternal verities rather than in material things that perish (Matt. vi. 19); a kingdom in which modesty supersedes love of display (Matt. vi. 1-8); and in which condemnation of others is superseded by prayer for them (Matt. vii.

1, 2; Luke xi. 5; Mark xi. 25). We see a kingdom where love banishes hate and the Golden Rule prevails. (Matt. vii. 12.)* If we were more thoroughly bringing into our civilization these kingdom ideals of Jesus, would it be possible, in a great international crisis, for a United States Senator, standing upon the floor of Congress, to ridicule Jesus's fundamental doctrine of life and human relationship and to declare that "the Golden Rule has nothing to do with politics and business"; or for another Congressman to declare in opposition to a plan for international brotherhood: "Our fathers were cursed with a conscience. Shall we now be cursed with humanity?" Indeed, it would seem that this vision of the Master was beyond the comprehension and appreciation of the people of his day or any day except as there is added to this philosophy of life a moral dynamic which the world hitherto had not known and which now we find alone in Jesus of Nazareth.

II. The Man Becomes the Message

"As we open the Book for this survey we see at once that it is concerned with a message and with a Man. At first the Man delivers the message, but more and more he becomes himself an essential part of it, until when his brief earthly course is over the message has become so identified with the Man that it is the task of all who know him to proclaim the Man as the message. Now whether we examine the message or the Man, we are led to this one result: that from the first they both appeal to humanity as a whole and to a particular people or to chosen individuals only as the instruments by which the world-wide appeal can be made effectual." (Horton.) As our vision clears through a study of the New Testament, we see that the Man indeed becomes the message of God to all men regarding the way, the truth,

*For a helpful study of Jesus's vision of life in the new age see "Thirty Studies about Jesus," Bosworth.

and the life. Without conceit or self-inflation, he declares: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one cometh unto the Father but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "The way"—the avenue of access to God. "The truth"—the embodiment of God's thought of righteousness and right dealing; God's finest expression of love and service. "The life"—the very life of God expressed in human personality and made available to all men everywhere through faith in Christ and daily fellowship with him. "I come that they may have life and may have it abundantly." (John x. 10b.) The world-wide application of the message as thus interpreted is seen in Jesus's understanding of his own mission. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." (John xii. 32.) It is seen in Jesus's favorite title, "Son of Man." After all that the scholars may say of this expression, it signifies without doubt his sense of kinship to mankind. It is seen in his explanation of his presence among men and his mission to man. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 16.) It is seen in John the Baptist's interpretation of Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29b.) It is seen in the description of Jesus as given by his closest friends and followers. For example: John the Beloved says in his prologue to his Gospel: "There was the true light even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world." (John i. 9; 1 John ii. 8.)

As we follow the progress of the message as told in the story of the early Church and in the writings of the apostles, we find that Christ is regarded as the message by those who first came to know him and the meaning of the gospel. For example: "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them the Christ." (Acts viii. 5.) "And straightway in the synagogues Paul proclaimed Jesus." (Acts ix.

20.) Paul's testimony runs thus: "That this Jesus whom I proclaim unto you is the Christ." (Acts xvii. 3.) "I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." (Rom. xv. 19.) "But we preach Christ crucified." (1 Cor. i. 23.) "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.) "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. i. 21.) "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Rom. i. 16.)

To realize the character of the gospel message, to be conscious of its universal elements and the divine Person who is its center, is to be aflame with a passion to make known this Person to all men and to thrust into the currents of the world's new life the ideals of Jesus. This passion is enkindled through an ever-deepening consciousness that Jesus is God's answer to human need and God's solution of every human problem. This growing consciousness deepens the sense of obligation to make him known to the children of men in all the earth.

> Needs must there be one way, our chief,
> Best way of worship; let me strive
> To find it, and when found, contrive
> My fellows also take their share!
> This constitutes my earthly care:
> God's is above it and distinct,
> That I, a man, with men are linked,
> And not a brute with brutes; no gain
> That I experience, must remain
> Unshared. (Robert Browning.)

Test Questions

1. What was unique in Jesus's thinking concerning himself?
2. Discuss fully the definition of "salvation."
3. Name five outstanding characteristics of the "new kingdom" which Jesus ushered in.
4. Do you think the principles of the kingdom of God are practical for the twentieth century?
5. What is meant by the statement that "the Man became the message"? (Give Bible reference.)

CHAPTER VI

JESUS THE MASTER MISSIONARY.—PART I

CAN we think of "the Man" of the New Testament as a missionary? A missionary is defined as one "sent on a mission," "a messenger," "an ambassador." From a religious point of view "the mission or message pertains to the propagation of religion or any doctrine or system with concomitant civilizing or benevolent work." Considered in the light of this technical definition, Jesus was a missionary. He was truly sent on a mission. If one is sent on a mission, there is implied a sending agent. We find that behind Jesus and his world program is God. John says: "God so loved the world . . . that he sent his Son into the world . . . that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 16, 17.) If the Father is motived by love in sending his Son on a divine mission involving extreme sacrifice and suffering, surely that mission is as encompassing in its benefits as the love which inspires it. If missions is a passion for humanity, or the effort to illuminate the world with divine truth, or to proclaim the good news to those who have never heard it, or to make real to men God's plan for the world, then Jesus was indeed the master missionary. In motive he stands the supreme test. "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us." (1 John iii. 16a.) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.) A study of his words and works as he prosecutes his mission discovers to us not only the passion which drove him forward with more than human energy, but also his purpose, the field of his operations, the processes and scope of his mission, and the details of the program by which he would extend and develop a kingdom of

spiritual ideals. These disclosures define him as the typical missionary and fully justify the caption of this chapter. Jesus's own interpretation of his mission is our best clue to the central message of the Bible. We will, therefore, study him as one sent from God on a mission. We will seek to discover his thoughts and to understand his words and works, that we may find out his conception of his mission.

Let us note, therefore:

I. His Purpose

As Jesus came to understand that in himself the Messianic hope of Israel was being fulfilled, he began to speak in very positive terms concerning the purpose of all that he came to suffer and to do. Following the record through the Gospels we discover his purpose in its central and related aspects.

1. Preparation for the Kingdom.—He purposed to prepare all men for the kingdom of God. His desire is to prepare them for spiritual experience and moral power in that kingdom which he came to establish. Sin had separated man from God, the world of mankind lay in wickedness, shut off by sins from the righteous government of God. Jesus's aim, therefore, no matter what it may cost him, is to give all men a chance to repent and find deliverance from sin. "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations." (Luke xxiv. 46, 47.) This experience in the realm of man's moral and spiritual need was not only central in the Master's mind, but in God's plan. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) In Jesus's thinking this break with sin through man's repentance is essential to prepara-

tion for entrance into the kingdom of God. He expressed it thus to Nicodemus: "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

While Israel hoped for a deliverance from her political enemies and waited eagerly for a king who could conquer her foes, Jesus thought and taught in terms of a kingdom of spiritual forces mastering sin in the hearts of men and nations and effective not only for the Jew but also for men of all nationalities. Israel had lost the soul of religion, the world about her lay in wickedness, mankind had wandered away from God. Jesus had come, therefore, to bring man back to God and to establish his rule among men. His idea of entering the kingdom is this: If a man would enter and help, he must be changed. If a nation would enter and help, it must be changed.

To see the purpose of Jesus in its fullness we must remember that all the world is his field and that it was not merely an individual salvation which he preached. "He did not come simply to save individuals out of the world. He came to make certain a new heaven and a new earth. And the individual can never know the full joy of the kingdom so long as there remains one soul outside it, or one evil custom which wounds human lives." (Gray.) For this reason he declares his purpose in these unmistakable terms: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations." (Matt. xxiv. 14.)

2. **To Draw Mankind to God.**—In contemplating the moral power and effect of his suffering and death Jesus does not think in terms of the narrow nationalism of the Jews, but in terms of humanity. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." (John xii. 32.) The drawing of all men to God is through the power of his atoning death. This gospel, therefore, must "first be preached unto all the nations" (Mark xiii. 10) if all men are to be drawn into fellowship with the Eter-

nal. In that most intimate glimpse into his inner nature and motive which is given us in the high priestly prayer we still find passion for humanity the dominant element. He prays that his followers may have vital contact with God and unity of spirit and aim to the end that the world may know that he is on a mission from God as an expression of eternal love. "That they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, that the *world* may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the *world* may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me." (John xvii. 21-23.) From of old the prophets had spoken of God's love and purpose which found full expression in Christ and his mission to man. "Jehovah appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. xxxi. 3.)

3. **To Awaken Right Motives.**—Jesus declares the high governing principle of the kingdom to be love. Two laws are, therefore, laid down by him as fundamental:

First, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment." (Matt. xxii. 37, 38.) Here is the supreme passion of the Christian soul, the one and only adequate motive in the Christian life. This makes possible the realization of the other ideals of Jesus.

Second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 39.) Here is found the basis of all right human relationships and the passion which makes possible the practice of the principles of Jesus. The rule of conduct in the new kingdom, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. vii.

12), is possible of application only as men are brought into the fellowhip of God's love and into fellowship one with another in a love born of that higher fellowship. Apart from this governing principle and rule of conduct, love, the kingdom ideals can never prevail.

As love is not a matter to be commanded into existence but rather a matter of fellowship and of congenial relationship, Jesus is tremendously concerned that men should learn to love God and one another as a result of contacts, understanding, and fellowship. So it is perfecty natural that he should endeavor to awaken right motives as man approaches God and as he comes in contact with his fellow man.

II. His Plan of Procedure

In order to change men, to draw them to God and into the fellowship of a great love, Jesus undertakes to establish right relationships.

1. **Between Man and God.**—Jesus sought to teach man his right relation to God. This he could best do by acquainting man with God's relation to him; therefore Jesus reveals the Fatherhood of God. This was a great advance in the understanding of God's nature and of his relationship to men and of man's relationship to God. Abraham knew God as the Almighty and himself as God's creation. Moses knew him as Jehovah and himself as in covenant with God. David knew him as the Shepherd of Israel and himself as a sheep of his fold. Each interpreted God to his day in the terms of his own experience. Jesus knew God as Father and himself as his Son. He could, therefore, interpret God to men as "Father." How did he do this?

First, Jesus came to know the Father for himself. Dr. Gray says:

"Into that wonderful process of learning and growing intimacy, which must have occupied the first thirty years of his life, we have not been allowed to see; but we do see the result. The result was that he

was able to show men the Father. He possessed something which he could pass on. He had a clear and radiant vision which he could share with other people, and he lived to pass on to others what he knew. He did it in various ways. Partly he did it by scattered and spontaneous utterances about God such as, 'He clothes the grass of the field,' 'He sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust,' 'He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil.' Those who heard him speak after that fashion must have come to realize that Jesus felt the presence and the handiwork of God in all the beauty and the bounty of nature, and all the ordinary processes of the natural world."

But more particularly Jesus did his work of revealing the Father through definite pictures of him. With the inspired touch of the world's supreme Master in the use of words, he painted God for us. He did not use abstract words; he preferred to tell the simplest of stories. Two in particular must always stand out. They are both in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. God, he said, is like a shepherd who, though he has ninety-nine of his hundred sheep safe in the fold, must needs go out into the mirk of the night to seek in the desert for the odd and foolish one that had got lost. And God is like a father with two unsatisfactory sons—one a silly wastrel and the other a self-righteous prig—who none the less spends himself in affectionate and endearing services to win them both home and to share his best with them. "And yet great as these methods proved for Christ's purpose, his supreme method was just to be himself."

He, alone of all men, dared to say: "I am in the Father and the Father in me." (John xiv. 11a.) "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9b). "All things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you." (John xv. 15b.) "I am come from the Father." (John xvi. 27). "He that hateth me hateth my Father also." (John xv. 23. Read Luke x. 21-24.)

In every way possible Jesus sought to bring men into the sense of the Fatherhood. For example: In teaching his disciples to pray, Jesus employed a term of endearment and of relationship out of the realm of their everyday experience. They could understand fatherhood. To him God was Father of all; so he teaches men to pray, "Our Father." Jesus would permanently establish in the mind of his disciples a sense of identification with the kingdom of God; so he teaches men to pray, "Thy kingdom *come*, thy will be done, as in heaven, *so in earth*."

2. **Between Man and Man.**—Jesus sought to teach the right relation between man and man. The inevitable implication of the Fatherhood of God is the brotherhood of man. That he may bring man into right relationship with his fellows Jesus interprets brotherhood in terms of familyhood and matuality.

There had come down through the ages the idea that man is the enemy of man. His primitive instincts led him to override, to compete. Experience had taught that the strong mastered the weak, enslaving and exploiting them. But Jesus shows that all this is wrong. If God is our Father, then we are brethren. If we are brethren, then our interests are common. Since God is revealed as the Father of all men, then all men are brethren. If we are all of one family, then we must learn to live together. The great ideal of brotherhood which Jesus brought into the world provides "a way for living together which shall be godlike. It is not simply a way of living, mark you, but a way of living together. This idea is called the kindgom of God." (Fleming.)

The kingdom of God, therefore, is in its essence a brotherhood, a kingdom of brotherly love, a kingdom in which men take seriously the idea of the brotherhood of man, and hence substitute love for hate, brotherhood for selfhood, fellowship for isolation, coöperation for competition, and peace for war. They also throw overboard all other "hold-overs" from primitive conceptions and pagan ideas which

have kept burning in the heart of man, from age to age, the fires of bitterness and hate, clogging the wheels of progress and plunging the world into war and unutterable suffering.

In setting up for men standards of living consistent with such a brotherhood, Jesus demands that men shall live in the consciousness of the Fatherhood of God and in the practice of the brotherhood of man. He demands that man shall live every day in unselfish consideration of others and on the basis of mutuality.

Recall the Master's encounter with the rich young ruler who, freely subscribing to all the fixed requirements of his religion, still fell short. When he professed to Jesus his faith in the doctrines of his Church Jesus promptly said, That is good! Now go practice them. It was at this point that the young man failed. We are not to despise doctrinal formulas or creedal statements; but if we would bring in the kingdom of God, we must practice brotherhood.

Bishop Mouzon says: "The kingdom of God is that order of society in which God is loved and served as Father and in which man is loved and served as brother." "If all men are my brothers, then I must be content to let my life become involved with theirs. I cannot isolate myself either from their sorrows or their wrongs. What hurts them must hurt me. I cannot enjoy security while they are insecure, nor comfort and plenty while they are in pain and need." (Gray.)

Do you recall the story of the tramp who appeared at the kitchen door, begging bread? The good housewife seated him at the kitchen table, got out a fresh loaf of bread and a big yellow pat of butter. As she began cutting dainty slices, it occurred to her that she ought to do some missionary work; so she paused and asked, "Are you a Christian?" The tramp said, "No." "Do you pray?" she inquired. "No. I do not know a prayer." "Shall I teach you one?" Being a diplomat, he assented,

still eyeing hungrily the bread and butter. She then said: "Repeat after me, 'Our Father.'" "Our Father," said the tramp. "Who art in Heaven," she continued. But the tramp interrupted. "Whose Father? Our Father? Your Father and mine? Then we are brother and sister, aren't we?" "Yes, that's the idea," the good woman assented, feeling that her lesson had struck in. "Well, then, if it is a fact that you are my sister and I am your brother, can't you cut the slices a little thicker?"

In these two facts of religion as taught by Jesus—viz., Fatherhood and brotherhood—are found the springs of the missionary idea. Out of them flow as living streams missionary obligation and privilege.

III. The Processes of His Kingdom

While the processes of the kingdom's growth are set forth chiefly in parables, yet Jesus makes very plain the fact that truth is alive and that the forces of the kingdom are vital. He therefore emphasizes the idea that the kingdom ideals are to grow as things that have life and that the influence of truth will spread in the earth and pervade the thinking of all men as the life in leaven spreads through the mass of meal.

1. **The Kingdom Grows Like Seed.**—"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." (Mark iv. 26-28.) Again he said: "How shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or in what parable shall we set it forth? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown upon the earth, though it be less than all the seeds that are upon the earth, yet when it is sown, groweth up, and becometh greater than all the herbs, and putteth out great branches; so that the birds of the heaven can lodge

under the shadow thereof." (Mark iv. 30-32.) Here Jesus sees the truth of the gospel as the seed corn for a harvest of righteousness in human living, seed corn sown with care and in faith which, under providential favor, germinates, grows, and yields the golden harvest of good. He sees the kingdom truth as tiny seed planted in fertile soil growing to its full size, strength, and beauty in the course of God's providence.

2. **The Truths of the Kingdom Like Leaven.**—"And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened." (Luke xiii. 20, 21.) The life in leaven is a silent but strong influence. The leaven, if effectual, leavens the whole lump. Jesus, therefore, sees the leaven of divine truth gradually but surely leavening all humanity. "The leaven which the Great Teacher introduced into human life has been working for two thousand years and still works."

When we look at these parables we realize "how unintelligible they would be if they were addressed to a section or to a nation and not to the whole of mankind. The field for the sowing is nothing short of the world; the leaven works in all humanity, until the whole is leavened." (Horton.)

3. **A Vital Force at Work.**—Jesus describes the influence of Christian character and good deeds as potent, permeating, and life-giving. Speaking to the true disciple, he says: "Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. v. 13, 14.) Clearly he anticipates that the processes of illuminating and saving shall go on until all the world is touched by the magic of such power. Jesus recognized in the incident of the broken alabaster box an influence that should live through the ages. See how he magnified as a permanent influence in the kingdom processes a single act of love and loyalty! "And verily I say unto you, Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that

also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark xiv. 9.) "See how far that little candle throws its beams. So shines a good deed in a naughty world." (Shakespeare.)

> So others shall
> Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,
> From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,
> And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
> (Elizabeth Barrett Browning.)

In the very processes of the kingdom described by Jesus there is the certain suggestion that the growth of the seed corn shall be to the harvest and that the leavening of truth shall go on until all is leavened. Jesus assumes that the truth of the gospel is indestructible and that no good deed passes unfructified by God's grace. These parables of the kingdom processes interpreted in relation to all the other words and works of Jesus can have no other meaning than that Christ's deeds of love and service were directed to the end that his kingdom might come and prevail in all the earth and that his disciples shall love and serve to the same divine end.

> The look of sympathy, the gentle word,
> Spoken so low that only angels heard;
> The secret act of pure self-sacrifice,
> Unseen by men, but marked by angels' eyes—
> These are not lost.
>
> The kindly plan devised for others' good,
> So seldom guessed, so little understood,
> The quiet, steadfast love that strove to win
> Some wanderer from the ways of sin—
> These are not lost. (Richard Metcalf.)

Test Questions

1. What are the implications in the definition of a missionary?
2. What are the impelling motives in the missionary enterprise?
3. In what terms did Jesus interpret his mission?
4. Discuss his mode of procedure.
5. What are the inevitable implications of the doctrine of the "Fatherhood of God"?

CHAPTER VII

JESUS THE MASTER MISSIONARY.—PART II

In the days of his flesh Jesus moved among men and touched humanity on the plane of common experience. Geographically the range of his travel was very limited. Through his daily contacts, however, with his countrymen and his casual encounters with foreigners, and through his passion to serve, we are able to discover his conception of the field of his ministry and the general program by which he undertook to meet the physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the people.

I. His Field

1. **Humanity in Need.**—The limits of the Master's ministry are measured only by human need. Those most in need received first consideration.

(1) To the burdened he says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. xi. 28-30.)

(2) To the thirsty of soul: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John vii. 37.)

(3) To the hungry of heart: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John vi. 35.)

(4) To the lost: "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix. 10.)

(5) To the sinner: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. ix. 13.)

Jesus makes it quite clear that his call is not limited to the Jews. "And other sheep I have which are not

of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." (John x. 16.) The essential unity of the race and the solidarity of the citizenship of God's kingdom are ever in the foreground of the Master's thinking as he trains men to send out his call and to gather citizens into his kingdom. The Son of our common Father and professing to be the Saviour of the world, he could not consistently exclude any from the privileges of God's redeeming grace. So with amazing tenderness the gospel call sweeps the wide circle of human need.

2. **The Alien.**—Those alien to his own race were beneficiaries of his compassion. Jesus did not personally undertake to fulfill all the ends which were in view when he came from God to dwell among men. He did not visit foreign lands nor search out peoples of other than the Jewish race in order to deliver to them the gospel message. It is significant, however, that wherever he encountered foreigners in distress he promptly and graciously ministered to their needs. Naturally, therefore, there were called into the circle of his followers those who were outside of the Jewish nation. Recall the woman of Samaria to whom Jesus gave the water of life at the well (John iv. 1-30), the believing Roman centurion whose servant was healed because of his faith (Matt. viii. 13), and the Canaanitish woman whose faith rescued her daughter from demoniacal possessions (Matt. xv. 22). Can we ever forget how the common Roman soldiers, weather-beaten and calloused of soul, gathering about the cross, are captured by the marvelous power of our redeeming Lord in his dying hours? "Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. xxvii. 54.)

Not finding it consistent with the direct and personal ministry he was to render to penetrate foreign lands and to search out those alien to his own race,

Jesus took care to have his disciples understand that he had come from God for a ministry to all the world. He was also careful to prepare them for the yet more extensive task of publishing the good news unto all nations. His inability to reach in person all the nations explains, no doubt, why Jesus said so much about "all nations" and the "uttermost parts of the earth." (We shall see the full force of Jesus's attitude in Chapter VIII.) Elaborating the inclusiveness of the kingdom idea, Jesus declared that the citizens of the new kingdom would be gathered from the four corners of the earth. "And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." (Luke xiii. 29.)

3. **The World of Mankind.**—The world of mankind is the subject of his saving grace. We have only to know the Jesus of the New Testament in order to recognize that mankind was ever in his mind as the subject of redemption and as included in the kingdom reign of righteousness. "I am come to save the world." (John xii. 47.) "For God sent his Son into the world . . . that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 17.)

It would seem that, as he lived among his friends and trained the twelve, his repeated declaration that he had come to mediate life to the whole world would be sufficient to fix in the mind of his followers the character and scope of his ministry and to secure coöperation through all ages. Nevertheless, after his resurrection, when the supreme miracle of the Christian Dispensation had been added as a testimony to his authority, Jesus sought out the apostles and delivered to them the Great Commission. There can be no mistake as to the Master's purpose to have them preach the gospel of the kingdom in all the world. There is no doubt as to his purpose of continued coöperation in the prosecution of the task. (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.)

II. His Program

The program of the Master Missionary is epitomized in Matthew iv. 23: "And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people." Here we see that his program involves teaching, preaching, and healing.

1. **Jesus Was the Great Teacher.** — "He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes," not as he had been taught by the Church, nor according to rule or rote, but with originality, with passion and imagination he interprets God the Father and unfolds his doctrines of life and human relationship. Jesus employed the finest pedagogical methods and exhibited the most wonderful insight into the human mind. (For examples of his methods as a teacher see Matthew v. 3-12; Mark ix. 36, 37; Luke xv. 1-32; Matthew vi. 25; John iii. 1-10.)

The teachings of Jesus center about the idea of the kingdom and the kingdom ideals. The kingdom idea, conceived as world encompassing, is held as the ultimate in God's purpose. The practice of the kingdom ideals, unfolded from time to time in conversations and sermons, is considered the mark of citizenship in the kingdom. The kingdom ideals as elaborated by Jesus are at once revolutionary and constructive and constitute a foundation for the building of an enduring civilization. Love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, and deal with all men as you would have them deal with you. Thus is summed up his idea of the fundamental doctrines of divine and human relationship. "And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Read Matthew xxii. 37-39.) "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you,

even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. vii. 12.)

2. **Jesus Was the Great Preacher.** — As an itinerant preacher of the gospel of the kingdom, the burden of his message was: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iv. 17.) "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel." (Mark i. 14, 15.) Recall how, in the early days of his ministry, Jesus traveled through Galilee, how he taught the multitude, and how he preached to the throng or opened the very heart of his gospel as he talked with his companions by the way or as he sat alone with a hungry-hearted individual. (Read Mark ii. 1, 2; Matthew xi. 1.)

Jesus is conscious of a unique message. "He whom God has sent speaks the message of God. He testifies to what he has seen and heard." (John iii. 32, 34.) Before the multitude and in private conversation Jesus delivered his message, opening the way to God and unfolding the words of life. He interprets God as Father of all, as opposed to the heathen conception of a tribal or national God. (John iv. 23, 24.) He indentifies himself at once with God and man and interprets himself as the Divine Son and Saviour of the world. (Read John iii. 16, 17; John xii. 44-50.) He offers himself as necessary to the world's life. "I am the light of the world." (John viii. 12.) "I am the bread of life." (John vi. 48.)

He presents a doctrine of the kingdom and a philosophy of life which solve all the problems of the human race. His doctrine is: Entrance into the kingdom of God is by a rebirth. "Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) This involves the remaking of the spiritual nature by a divine process, because by nature man does not possess the consciousness of God nor a sense

of sonship, nor has he aptitude for life in the kingdom. As we have seen from the kingdom ideal, Christ's philosophy of life is: "Love God supremely; love your neighbor as yourself, and deal with all men as you would have them deal with you." This involves obedience to God and, in dealing with men, mutual concession and coöperation.

Thus entering into the kingdom by rebirth and into holy fellowship with God and one another through daily contacts, we are prepared for the working out in human society of the kingdom ideals. To get the full implications of the doctrines of God and of human life as preached by Jesus we must see them in their universal application. If taken only in their individualistic aspect they cannot be made to fit into his kingdom idea. The recognition of the universal scope and world-wide application of the gospel is necessary to its proper interpretation. When we have grasped this truth we can better appreciate the fact that the world can be saved only through the process of saving individuals. Thus the individual in whom truth dwelleth becomes the seed corn or the leaven of the gospel. Jesus saves the individual by the power of his grace. He saves society by the power of his ideals.

3. **Jesus Was the Great Physician.**—"He went about healing all manner of diseases." "And they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons and epileptic and palsied, and he healed them." (Matt. iv. 24.) He healed many that were possessed with demons. "And when even was come, they brought unto him many possessed with demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick." (Matt. viii. 16. For further study of his healing power read Matthew xiv. 35, 36; Mark i. 29-34; Mark vi. 55, 56; Luke ix. 11.) Healing was necessary to round out the ministry of Jesus, for he came to save all men and all of man.

4. **His Methods.**—Jesus's methods—viz., "teach-

ing," "preaching," "healing"—reach the mind, the soul, and the body of man. Seeing the sufferings of the people, he literally suffered with them. "Being moved with compassion, he healed them." This is the normal missionary impulse.

As Jesus pursued his mission he saw the physical as well as the spiritual need of the multitude. His compassion included the whole man. So in the miracle of regeneration he cleansed the soul, thus making possible a clean body. Sin and sickness are so often related as cause and effect that deliverance from sin aids health. The reverse process was also often employed. By healing the body, he opened the way for the cleansing of the soul.

Jesus makes it clear that the chief end in view through his healing ministry is not that the bodies of men may be comfortable, but that human souls may be delivered from sin and that the world may come to know that he "hath power to forgive sins" and thus to master the foes of man's body, mind, and soul. As he touched humanity, peculiarly afflicted in his day through ignorance and insanitation, he realized that if man were to have the mastery sin must be conquered and man delivered from its power.

Jesus was unwilling to work miracles of healing to satisfy the love of the crowd for the unusual or the spectacular. He seemed to hesitate often to display his own power, but pity impelled him, and his great antipathy to sin as the foe of man led him most naturally to add to his preaching and teaching this direct ministry of healing. He regarded it as fundamental in that great ministry to the world which the new age should bring in; so he gave to his disciples authority to heal. "And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." (Matt. x. 1.)

Jesus included this ministry in that message to John which was sent in evidence of his divinity: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and tell

John the things which ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them." (Matt. xi. 4, 5.) Interest in this phase of gospel ministry needs to be revived and should receive larger emphasis in the program of the Church of our day.

5. **Molding Missionary Methods.**—This brief epitome of the Master's plan of work which we find in Matthew iv. 23 has typed the program of modern missions. We have the evangelistic missionary with his gospel of a new life, the teaching missionary with his program of instruction concerning God and nature, and the medical missionary with all that modern science has revealed of the healing and surgical art.

While the Church is more or less aroused to the proclamation of the message, while there is an educational awakening in our day that is already outrunning the material resources of the Church, we should not forget that in medical missions there is a "language which all can understand and which carries a message which every man cares sooner or later to hear." From the moment the medical missionary sets foot on his chosen field he is master of the universal language, the unspoken tongue of the world. And he is welcomed to the home of the stranger. The simple Arab lifts for him the curtain of his goats' hair tent and bids him enter. The mandarin calls him to his palace. The peasant begs him to come to the lonely cabin. The Brahmin leads him to the recesses of his zenana. Heal the bodily ailments of the heathen in the name of Christ, and you are sure at least that he will love you and bless you and all that you say will have a meaning and a power not conveyed by other lips." (Dr. G. E. Post.)

Our contact with Jesus in the four Gospels brings us unquestionably into the fellowship of the world's greatest missionary Teacher, Preacher, and Physi-

cian, and from his hands we have received a divine commission and incidentally a model program. No matter whether we analyze the Man and his methods or survey the whole field of his words and works recorded in the four Gospels, weighing the comments and criticism of his friends and of his foes and testing the soundness of his doctrines of God and of life, or whether we measure, through the centuries, the influence of the Man and the effectiveness of his message and methods, we reach the same conclusion; viz., that Jesus is God's answer to human need, God's solution to every human problem. We realize, even if unwilling to live up to the implications, that Jesus is God's gift to all the world, as an expression of divine love for all men everywhere. In Jesus alone, then, can the twentieth century find healing for the sore of the world and the basis of brotherhood and peace.

"Jesus! the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly.

Jesus! the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given;
It scatters all their guilty fear;
It turns their hell to heaven.

Jesus the prisoner's fetters breaks,
And bruises Satan's head;
Power into strengthless souls he speaks,
And life into the dead.

O that the world might taste and see
The riches of his grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.

His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
'Tis all my business here below,
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'"

Test Questions

1. Enumerate the classes of people which are mentioned by the New Testament writers as being the special beneficiaries of the Master's mercy and ministry.
2. Discuss fully the Master's threefold task.
3. What was Jesus's motive in healing?
4. Why must any adequate plan of world missions include a threefold program?
5. Do you think that the Church has given due emphasis to its ministry of healing?

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIANS CALLED TO BE MISSIONARIES

THE Master's mission was to reveal the Father, to open the way of approach to God for sinful man and a ruined world, to make available to man the life of God "and to give his life a ransom for many." "And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me." (John xii. 45.) "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9.) "Jesus saith . . . I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John xiv. 6.) "God sent his Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 17; x. 10.) "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark x. 45.)

After a brief career of fellowship with man in the flesh, in which his life was a faithful witness to the Father, a perfect exemplification of his ideals, a marvelous service to humanity through teaching, preaching, and healing, he finished his work in death upon the cross. This would have been an unspeakable tragedy had it not been "his last and greatest deed of service." He had taught men of a kingdom of spiritual ideals which should encompass the whole earth. He had spoken of winning the nations to God and of bringing all men into subjection to these ideals. Alas, he is fallen in the prime of his young manhood! How then is this work to go on?

At first his disciples were plainly distressed and sorely discouraged, but Jesus had a plan. It was implied in much that he had said as he talked with his friends and trained the twelve, and as he sought to explain to all the universal elements in the gospel. After his resurrection it was made unmistakably

plain. His plan was this: To transfer to human hands the responsibility of teaching, preaching, and healing and of exemplifying the high ideals of this kingdom.

I. Human Witnesses Empowered by the Holy Spirit

"Christ alone can save this world, but Christ can't save this world alone." Thus we find that in projecting the movement to establish the kingdom of God among men, Jesus provides a program in which God and man work together. The scope of the plan involves the whole world; the personnel includes every true disciple. We read: "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these tnings." (Luke xxiv. 45-48.)

The Christ's part is a sacrificial ministry, an atoning death; man's part, preaching repentance and witnessing to the truth revealed in Christ. These are the fundamental elements in his plan. See how clear is the promise of divine enabling when human personality is wholly surrendered to God: "And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 49.) "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

When he had reached the climax of his own conception of his mission, Jesus said to the Father in an exalted experience of prayer: "Having accomplished the work thou hast given me to do, as thou didst send me into the world even so send I them into the

world." (John xvii. 4b, 18.) Thus the divine hand passes over to human hands the supernatural task of winning the world to righteousness. "Through souls fired with a passion only a little akin to his own he is finding a way to win the world for which he died."

II. Every Disciple Divinely Commissioned

The Master rested the progress, the perpetuity, and the power of his kingdom upon the faith and obedience of his disciples. It being his policy by human witnesses to make known the truth, and through human lives, as the channels of his power, to touch the heart of the world and lift humanity to God, he sent his disciples into all the world under a divine commission. This was a commission to teach the doctrines of the kingdom, to preach the gospel of salvation, to exemplify in daily life the kingdom ideals, to heal the bodies of men, and to pray daily for the coming of the kingdom and for recruits for the world field. See how clearly these duties and responsibilities are involved in the commission to serve humanity which Jesus delivered to his followers: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark xvi. 15.) "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke vi. 31.) "And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." (Luke ix. 1, 2.)

Jesus is just as explicit in the directions given concerning prayer: "After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy

name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." (Matt. vi. 9, 10.) "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest." (John iv. 35.) "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke x. 2.)

Andrew Murray well says: "So wonderful is the surrender of his work into the hands of his Church, so dependent has the Lord made himself on them as his body, through whom alone his work can be done, so real is the power which the Lord gives his people to exercise in heaven and earth, that the number of the laborers and the measure of the harvest do actually depend on their prayer."

It is perfectly plain that in the Master's mind witnessing to all nations and peoples was a primary duty of every disciple. This was not a matter in which a disciple had right of choice, in which he could have a share or not as he chose. This duty was not to be regarded as something outside of the regular program of the Christian life, but the very heart of it, not something extraneous, tacked on, or superfluous, but the very center and core of Christian duty and service.

"The early Church believed that this commission to go and preach the gospel was for the whole Church, and every man, woman, and child felt it a bounden duty to make Christ known. The Christians of the first century did more than any generation of Christians since has done to evangelize the whole world. They reached all parts of the then-known world, and all classes of society from the slave to the high official. They met and conquered the greatest obstacles, and endured severe persecutions." (Fiske.) Our supreme missionary need to-day is that we shall all be fired with a similar passion, moved by the same

sense of duty, and stirred to deeds of equal devotion and heroism.

There is no mistaking the character of the mission nor the ends in view when Jesus commissioned his disciples to "go." The task for the disciples of our Lord involved in the Great Commission would have been absurdly impossible, and it is safe to say the disciples would never have taken it seriously but for the promise of divine presence and power. The dynamic of God is pledged for the task:" I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." (Read Acts i. 8.)

A starting point in the witnessing is named, and the limit fixed is the outermost rim of the world. Every phase of the gospel story makes plain the fact that yokefellowship of the divine and the human is God's plan. "Workers together with God" are we. Our tasks are one with the Master's. He is the Master missionary. We are his under-missionaries, sent hither and thither with vast diversity of gifts to a great diversity of tasks. Do we dread the fellowship of his suffering? Do we shrink from comradeship in his sacrifice? Do we shut our eyes to the wideness of his vision? Do we hold our feet in easy paths? Or do we say with glad hearts?

> "O Matchless honor, all unsought,
> High privilege, surpassing thought,
> That thou shouldst call us, Lord to be
> Linked in work-fellowship with thee;
> To carry out thy wondrous plan,
> To bear thy message unto man;
> 'In trust with Christ's own word of grace
> To every soul of human race."

No ambassador of a king was ever more surely commissioned and credentialed to represent his government on a mission than we are to represent Christ to the nations that sit in darkness.

III. Every Disciple Has a Place in the Plan

Having made missions central in the life plan of every Christian, Jesus sees to it that all may have a part. He provides various types of service suited to the varying gifts of his disciples. The all-inclusiveness of the divine commission distributes to the disciples of Jesus the numerous phases of the great task. We see the picture in the Master's mind: His disciples witnessing (Luke xxiv. 48), teaching (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), preaching (Mark xvi. 15), exemplifying (Luke vi. 31), healing (Luke ix. 1, 2), praying (Luke x. 2). Not every disciple can do all, but each can do a part.

Paul again puts the Master's thoughts into words when he says to the Church at Rome: "For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." (Rom. xii. 4-8. Read 1 Corinthians xii. 4-11; Romans x. 13-15.)

In God's economy there is a place of vital importance for the one-talented as well as for the ten-talented man.

> And God gives to every man
> The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
> That lifts him into life and lets him fall
> Just in that niche he was ordained to fill.
>
> (Cowper.)

In teaching his disciples the high privilege and responsibility of prayer, Jesus has magnified as an

essential element in real praying that yearning of soul for the coming of God's kingdom and the prevalence of his will in all the earth as it prevails in heaven. Here are inescapable missionary implications. Dr. O. E. Brown says: "He who prays 'Our Father' is either a missionary or a hypocrite." And Ruskin nobly says: "No one can offer the daily prayer 'Thy kingdom come' without doing more than praying." "Praying that the kingdom may come implies that we set about to realize it first in ourselves, then in society, and ultimately in all the earth." (Horton.) Can a Christian say "Our Father" without feeling that all men are God's children? Or can he pray "Thy kingdom come" without a sincere acceptance of the lordship of Jesus and without recognizing the obligation of the loyal subject to win men to this kingdom and to seek in every way possible to win back the allegiance of the disloyal?

In teaching them to pray, in opening to them by parable the outreach of the kingdom and by direct command and commission, the Master defines the duty of every Christian as involving share-ship in the task of winning the world for Christ. "God has not given us vast learning to solve all the problems, or unfailing wisdom to direct all the wanderings of our brothers' lives, but he has given to every one of us the power to be spiritual, and by our spirituality to lift and enlarge and enlighten the lives we touch." (Phillips Brooks.)

We can appreciate the significance of the Master's effort to enlist all his followers as witnesses unto the nations of the earth if we will raise questions like this: Can a Christian limit the range of his interest and prayers to his own family, Church, or community and really pray the Lord's Prayer? Can he thus circumscribe and limit his praying and confine his philantropic efforts to his local Church, community, or State, and at the same time have the mind of the Master, his world visions, his dominant sense of human brotherhood, and his consuming passion for

humanity? Can one be indifferent to millions of God's children and ignore the cry of human need as it comes from the four corners of the earth and at the same time grow rich in the fellowship of the Master's aims and ideals?

IV. A Demand Extraordinary

There is upon the Church of our day a demand extraordinary. The task involved in Christianizing America, in evangelizing the world, in regenerating non-Christian society, and in redeeming the nations is so immense and so difficult as to require the faithful and heroic service of every true disciple of our Lord. Every talent, every resource needs to be requisitioned for this stupendous undertaking.

We are really confronted by an extraordinary situation. It has been created by the cumulative effect of a century of missionary success and by the great war in which we have been so recently engaged. The world we face to-day and must face to-morrow is not the world of yesterday. New responsibilities are thrown upon the Christians of America. New fields are open for missionary activity. New opportunities and responsibilities emerge in fields already entered. The scope of missionary operations is widening, the demand for missionaries is growing more insistent, and the demands upon the missionary are multiplying and becoming more and more exacting.

It is evident, therefore, that if we are to hold the salient already driven into heathen darkness and are to go on to greater victory in the Christian conquest of the nations, every Christian must do his duty.

As we have seen from the words of the Master and of Paul, every one must have a share; all must work. Ability indicates and defines Christian responsibility. There is a heaven-born wisdom which adapts human tasks to individual gifts and aptitudes. No one of us can do all that the Church is commissioned to accomplish, but each can do a part.

Let us work while it is called to-day, "for the night cometh when no man can work." (John ix. 4.)

Remember, it is "Not by might, nor by power [physical], but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Zech. iv. 6. Read Acts i. 8.)

Test Questions

1. What is the greatest honor that the Master has conferred upon those who bear his name?
2. What is the individual Christian's relation to the program of missions?
3. Can you think of a situation in the experience of an individual Christian which would relieve him of obligation to have some share in God's missionary plan?
4. Do you agree with Dr. O. E. Brown's statement concerning the Lord's Prayer?
5. Do you believe that Christianity is adequate for the world's needs? Give reasons for your belief.

CHAPTER IX

THE DYNAMICS OF MISSIONS

THE Bible reveals not only the purpose of God to redeem the world and to establish a reign of righteousness among men, but also discloses the Master's program for carrying out this purpose, and indicates clearly the processes and the elements of power employed in bringing these things to pass. The forces available to the Church of God through all ages are discovered in a study of the dynamic elements in the Pentecostal Church. All the essential elements of power are mentioned in the second chapter of Acts and appear repeatedly throughout the record of the growing missionary passion and the increasing spiritual success of the apostolic Church. In a study of this chapter we observe that the following dynamic elements are mentioned.

I. THE DIVINE ELEMENT

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts ii. 4a.) The definite promise that the power of God would descend upon his people was given by the Master to the faithful disciples on certain conditions which seem to have been fully met on Pentecost. We note that in making clear to the understanding of his disciples the true gospel message and in opening to them the secret of power Jesus said: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 45-49.) "Ye shall re-

ceive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

From the very beginning the Holy Spirit assumed the leadership of the forces in the early Church. He appears as the divine dynamic in every movement projected. As the little group awaited, as bidden, in harmony of spirit and in fervent prayer, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts ii. 4a.) In the preaching of the apostles the Holy Spirit was present, imparting power and producing results. For example, Peter preached in the power of this Spirit, and three thousand souls were converted. (Read Acts ii. 14, 41.) The account of his second sermon begins thus: "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them." (Acts iv. 8a.)

In selecting deacons the presence of the Holy Spirit was the determining factor, and his influence in the lives of men made the work of the Church to prosper. (Read Acts vi. 1-8.) When Peter was converted to the missionary idea the Holy Spirit honored abundantly his ministry. (Read Acts xi. 44-48.) When God would have the gospel preached to the Gentile world the Holy Spirit called and commissoned Barnabas and Saul. (Read Acts xiii. 1-4.)

Thus throughout the history of the organization and early activities of the Church, God is ever present in the person of the Holy Spirit, the divine energy, working upon human lives and inspiring stupendous undertakings.

The Church of to-day needs more dynamics in proportion to its mechanics. The tendency is to multiply machinery. The Pentecostal Church was very simple in its organization, but the power was ample. To-day the organization is immense, the machinery complex, but often the power is lacking. We need to realize that the Holy Spirit is the great dynamic of God always available to his people and, conjoined with the other elements of power in the

kingdom, sufficient for every task confronting the Church. His power cannot be substituted by multiplication of organization or the restless whirl of busy feet or the tireless toil of willing hands.

That the strength of the Church is not in machinery but in the power of God was made plain long before Pentecost. "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) The winning of the world for Christ is indeed a superhuman task. Nevertheless God's power is ever available to his Church on the conditions made plain in the story of Pentecost. A recognition of this fact is fundamental to success in any missionary program of to-day.

II. The Human Element

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven." (Acts ii. 5.) Upon these men the Holy Spirit descended, imparting to them the power of God. Thus we see that through human lips he began to speak, and men out of many nations heard the message of the gospel, "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians." (Acts ii. 9-11.)

It is interesting to note how many nations were represented in the crowd that witnessed this manifestation of God's power. It is also interesting to note how profoundly many of them were impressed by what they heard and by the supernatural elements in what they saw and felt.

The use of human witnesses as the means of propagating the ideals of the kingdom seems to have been constantly in the mind of the Master throughout his whole career. To his disciples he said: "Ye are my witnesses," "Ye are the light of the world,"

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Speaking to his Father of his friends and followers, he said: "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." (John xvii. 18.) To the faithful he said: "And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts. i. 8b.) It pleased God to choose human personalities as the conduits of his power. Through Peter the message was proclaimed with power and reached three thousand souls. Through Stephen the testimony was given with such power that it reached the conscience of young Rabbi Saul. Through Paul God so spoke to the Gentile world as to change the currents of human life for all time.

God can use the Spirit-filled Church because here, as a result of vision and sympathy, the voice of the true prophet is heard, and here unity of faith and action fully conserve all available human energy.

With two-thirds of the world still pagan, God is as dependent to-day as in apostolic times upon human witnesses. No other way has been devised for making known the truths of the kingdom or the meaning of Jesus to a lost world. Human need is so great and so insistent that every new day brings a new challenge to the Church to witness for Jesus unto the ends of the earth. This witness, delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit, issues to-day in results as remarkable as Pentecost. One's soul is stirred by the great revival in Korea, the mass movements in India, the story of the sudden breaking down in 1914 of the bitter hate and opposition of China's Literati. Multiplied miracles of grace and of healing mark the faithful ministry of the modern missionaries and betoken the presence and power of God. No new secret of power has been discovered. It is still the Holy Spirit, working through human instrumentality, awakening the world and moving the heart of man toward God.

The Bible clearly presents as fundamental in our

missionary task Spirit-filled witnesses at home and abroad, in the missionary body and in the rising Church in non-Christian lands. If we believe the New Testament, we must accept as personal the command to bear witness. That every Mohammedan is a faithful witness to Allah is the secret of Islam's power. Shall we be less faithful to the commission of our divine Lord and Master?

III. The Divine-Human Element

1. The Preached Word.—"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spake forth unto them." (Acts ii. 14a.) Preaching the gospel was God's appointed method of propaganda. In the earlier disclosure of his plans, Jesus said: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations." (Matt. xxiv. 14.) Paul is philosophical in his argument regarding this matter in his letter to the Romans: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? Even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things." (Rom. x. 13-15.) Again he refers in writing to the Corinthians to preaching as a human method ordained of God. "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21b.)

No wonder the results of Peter's sermon were remarkable. His was an extraordinary opportunity. Being himself baptized with the Holy Spirit, he preached to a great throng in the presence of a Church of which every member was also "filled with the Holy Spirit." What a backing for a preacher of the gospel! The immediate and abiding results

were to be expected: three thousand conversions; steadfastness in the faith; holy fellowship; faithfulness in prayer; ample resources; additions to the Church daily. These are the fruits issuing normally from the character of preaching and the type of Church which was inaugurated at Pentecost. The twentieth century preacher is entitled, on the same conditions, to similar manifestations of God's power and to like results. He would witness them, no doubt, if his Church members were as Peter's, "all filled with the Holy Spirit." Perhaps subtle elements of doubt and unconscious reliance upon organization and mechanical agencies and the wider intellectual appeal have led many ministers of the gospel to enter the pulpit unanointed and hence unprepared for the proclamation of the truth which moves and which is adequate to redirect the thinking of men and to rechannel the life of a wayward world.

2. **The Written Word.**—The writings of the New Testament later became an element of great power in the propagation of the gospel. The Old Testament Scriptures were employed in the preaching of Jesus and the apostles as the basis of the "good news," the new message brought by them to men. They constituted also a sound basis for the preaching of the apostolic Church. But when the New Testament writings were completed and made available and in later centuries were widely circulated, the written word seems to have taken a position along with the preached word as an element of power in the promotion of the kingdom of Jesus. If the program of world evangelization goes on and the nations are won by the power of the message, we must exalt the Book; we must preach the word.

Lunching with a group of Methodist preachers in Porto Alegre, a young Brazilian preacher told me of his conversion. He lived with his Catholic parents in the far interior of the great State of Rio Grande do Sul, far from advancing civilization and sur-

rounded alone by the influence of the Church of his fathers. His parents were ignorant, though not distressingly poor. He had never heard of the Bible, of Protestantism, of a missionary, nor a Protestant Church or Sunday school. He had learned only the superstitions of the Roman Catholic peoples, and his boyish heart was filled with fear of tormenting spirits and inescapable punishments if by chance he should offend the saints or go contrary to the teachings of the Church. One day a Methodist missionary left a New Testament at his home. The boy and his mother read the wonderful story of Jesus with great delight. At last, however, the father found them with the book. He flew into a rage, told them of the dire distress which would surely befall them if the book should stay under the roof, tore it from the hands of the lad, threw it into the fire which had been kindled under the wash pot, and left the place in a rage. As soon as his father had gone the boy snatched the burning book from the fire and extinguishing the flames which were rapidly consuming the cover, crawled under the house and hid his treasure out of sight. When the irate father was known to be far from home the boy would crawl under the house and bring out his New Testament, and he and the mother would read and reread the story of the Nazarene.

By and by the boy realized that he loved Jesus and wanted to serve him. He and his mother found great joy in their secret. The boy constantly watched the road for a passing stranger who might tell him where he could learn more about Jesus. At length one of our missionaries passed, became interested in the youth, and sent him to Uruguayana to school. Later he went to Granbery College, finally entered the ministry, and at the time of my meeting with him had been five or six years a member of the South Brazil Conference, a devoted and faithful servant of Christ.

Deep in the darkness of an unevangelized land,

ignorant of the message of Protestantism, having never heard of a missionary, of the Bible, nor of a Sunday school, this little Brazilian lad became possessed of a New Testament, cherished its message, came to know Jesus, and gave himself to the great King through the matchless power of the message which the Book brings to the hungry heart of man.

Let us magnify the Book! Let us preach with new faith and enthusiasm the message of the Book!

IV. The Material Element

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need." (Acts ii. 44, 45.) The communistic program of the apostolic group evidently supplied all needed funds in the early days of the Church. The striking fact is that a definite financial policy was adopted, and nothing was left to haphazard methods. The policy of having all things in common seems, however, to have given way early to the loftier doctrine of Christian stewardship as taught by Jesus. The dispersion of the Christians, the rapid spread of Christianity, and the coming of diverse elements into the movement were doubtless anticipated by the man of Galilee when he laid down, as fundamental to the success of his kingdom, the doctrine of Christian stewardship.

Money is an agent of great power in the world, equally potential in the promotion of good or of evil. The Church in the modern era has advanced wonderfully in its thought concerning money and its uses; but even yet with a gospel adequate to regenerate the world, it is impotent to answer the call of the nations and to solve the problems of human life largely through lack of funds.

This condition arises from the fact that the Church has drifted from the Master's view of money. A sense of personal ownership and control has possessed

even the disciples of our Lord, and it is still difficult to lead men to see that all things are God's; that our possessions are held in trust. In swinging away from the legalism of the Old Testament unfortunately men have eliminated the tithe as a requirement without substituting therefor the Christ doctrine of Christian stewardship. The love of money and the misuse of money are to-day, as aforetime, a subtle paralysis upon the spiritual power of the Church. Until we deal more fairly with God in money matters the Church cannot renew its Pentecostal experience.

We have come upon a new day, however, in which men are thinking in more generous terms of the kingdom, it claims and its prospects.

While on my first circuit I was sorely troubled when one of my stewards came to me and said: "Please take my name off the church book."

"Why?" said I.

"Because it is costing me too much," complained the official.

"Let's see," and I drew from my pocket a memorandum book which contained the record of the year in financial matters. "You did not make an offering in March when I took the home mission collection; nothing in June when the foreign mission collection was taken; not a cent when I took the balance of the Conference collections in the fall. Let's see about the quarterage. I note that your record is blank except at the third Quarterly Conference, when you either collected or gave twenty-five cents."

Said I: "I will take your name off the book on one condition." "What is that?" he inquired.

"That is that you will take this quarter back." I offered it to him, and he took it.

You can imagine the disgust and discouragement of a young preacher, aflame with missionary enthusiasm and thinking in the terms of Christian stewardship and world conquest, when a prominent official proposes to withdraw from the Church because "it costs too much."

It was my good fortune, however, eighteen years later, to be seated in the meeting of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America in Philadelphia January 7, 1907, when that princely Christian, Mr. Samuel B. Capen, representing a large group of American business men, came before that body of missionary leaders and told of the great prayer meeting of the laymen which was held November 6, 1906, in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, in celebration of the centennial of the Haystack Prayer Meeting. He told of new visions and of new awakenings. It was the birth hour of the Laymen's Missionary Movement. Said he: "What we offer you is a 'Missionary Movement.' It has a great ideal—namely, to reach the whole world in this generation. It recognizes the fact that the Church has been in the 'retail business' long enough. It is a challenge for something larger and more far-reaching. Its broad statesmanship will appeal to men. Its purpose is to do the largest thing of which any one has any conception: 'To devise a comprehensive plan looking toward the evangelization of the world in this generation.' It is to ask the men of this generation not to pass their own work on to future generations but to do it themselves, now."

Thus within the first two decades of my minstry I passed from the narrow selfishness of the ignorant circuit official out into the broad human sympathy and world vision of the American merchant prince. It is possible that through a general awakening to Christ's gospel of money, we shall pass beyond the Centenary celebration and the forward movements of recent years into an era of thinking in terms of Christian stewardship which may mean the mastership of Jesus in the life of his people. In that event the world will be illumined through the light of the gospel ere the century closes.

With all the elements of power found in the Pentecostal Church still available to us and with all the agencies of modern progress also at our command,

the Church of to-day should drive forward in the Christian conquest of the nations to a triumphant success in the twentieth century.

Test Questions

1. In what respect was Pentecost an inaugural event?
2. What elements in the Pentecostal experience of the Church do you regard as permanent?
3. Do you consider as interdependent the four dynamic elements found in the second chapter of Acts, to which attention is called in this chapter?
4. How do you explain the remarkable results attendant upon Peter's preaching at Pentecost?
5. To what extent have we a right to expect a repetition of such manifestation and upon what conditions?
6. What is your conception of Christian stewardship?

CHAPTER X

THE OUTREACH OF THE EARLY CHURCH

I. The Church in Jerusalem

"Pentecost is an inaugural event—the inauguration of the evangelistic activity of the Christian Church when the disciples began the work to which they had been called by the risen Lord—the work of witness bearing." (McGiffert.) In projecting this movement Jesus provided a program which involved the whole world. "Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." (Luke xxiv. 45-49.) "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.) The missionary elements in this program, as we saw in Chapter IX, were providentially conserved in all the incidents of the Pentecostal event. Nearly all the nations to which the gospel was afterwards carried by the apostles and their coworkers were represented in Jerusalem on that memorable occasion. "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians." (Acts

ii. 9-11.) The Holy Spirit was present in full measure for the enabling of all God's people, and the preaching of Peter on that occasion had an effect which reached far beyond the borders of Judaism. The Jerusalem Jews were, however, so narrow and nationalistic in all their interests and aims that they were slow to set in operation the Master's missionary plans. From the ascension of our Lord to the martyrdom of Stephen, a period of about six years, the Christian movement was restricted geographically to the city of Jerusalem, where a large number of both Hebrew and Hellenist converts were made. Dr. Andrew Sledd says: "It does not seem to have been a part of their program at this period to enter upon any campaign for the evangelization of the world." Providence, however, provided a way for thrusting the gospel out of Jerusalem into the regions beyond. The first step was the anointing of the little Jerusalem Church with the Holy Spirit, as Jesus had promised. The next step was the witnessing of his disciples, first in Jerusalem and subsequently in Judæa, in Samaria and then unto the uttermost part of the earth. Peter and John as the leading evangelists, and Stephen as a lay leader, had preached the gospel and wrought wonders in Jerusalem and vicinity with such effect that all that region was stirred with excitement over this new movement. As the witnesses grew more numerous and bolder, opposition grew into bitter persecutions.

These persecutions constituted a third step in the preparation of the Church for an expanding program. Strange as it may appear, persecutions seemed necessary to start the Church upon its broader mission.

II. The Church in Samaria and Syria

As a direct result of the persecutions the Christians were scattered abroad. They "went everywhere preaching the word." Philip went to Samaria to a

people despised by the Hebrew race. He preached Christ and won many converts. So great was his success that Peter and John were sent up to Samaria to strengthen the new converts. They also preached in many villages of Samaria. The striking significance of Philip's success in Samaria lies chiefly in the fact that no Jew would be expected to have dealings with a Samaritan. (Read Acts viii. 1-25.)

"But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went." (Acts viii. 26, 27a.) On this trip Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch and won him to Christ. Dr. Bosworth says: "Considerable light is thrown upon Luke's interpretation of Philip's experience with the eunuch whom he found reading the book of Isaiah when it is remembered that two classes of people are mentioned together in the prophecy of Isaiah as not naturally eligible for admission to the Messianic kingdom. One of these classes Luke is about to take up in Chapter X, with great emphasis upon the significance of its admission into the new movement; namely, Gentiles that live among the Jews and worship Jehovah, but that do not become Jewish proselytes. The other class, closely associated with them as not naturally eligible for the new kingdom, is eunuchs. In Deuteronomy xxiii. 1 the prejudice against eunuchs is expressed, and in Isaiah lvi. 1-8 eunuchs and God-fearing foreigners are classed together as ineligibles for whom provision will nevertheless be made. (Read the passage in Isaiah.) It is reasonably clear that the inclusion of a eunuch would seem to Luke a decisive forward step."

Philip's faith and obedience which led him to take the unfrequented road toward the far countries of the south opened the way for him to "preach the glad tidings of Jesus" to a man from Africa. It is not clear whether the eunuch was a Gentile proselyte or an Ethiopian Jew who had been up to Jerusalem

to worship; probably the latter, as he was reading the Jewish Scriptures. In any event he was eagerly seeking the truth, received Philip's explanation of the Scriptures gladly, and was converted to Christ. His mission performed, Philip was caught away. The Ethiopian, having found the Saviour, went on his journey rejoicing. Thus the gospel message reaches into Africa.

The significant fact here is that in spite of his Jewish prejudice Philip preached the gospel to a eunuch who was also of another race. Thus in the early outreach of the gospel class distinctions were disregarded and boundaries of geography and race ignored. (Acts viii. 26-40.)

"They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." (Acts xi. 19-23.) Thus again on account of the dispersion we find that Christianity has spread to Phœnicia and Cyprus and up to Antioch, the center of Rome's military power in the East. The Biblical record of this period (A.D. 36-47) is very brief, but we can well imagine that with the jealous hatred of the Jew and the soulless tyranny of Rome uniting in cruel persecution of the Christians, it must have required on the part of the Church strong faith and great fortitude, and an abiding sense of the Spirit's presence, to press

on with their evangel. Be that as it may, the good news spread:

> "And, cometlike, adding flame to flame,
> The priests of the new evangel came."

So strong was this outward sweep of the gospel that within about a decade the center of progressive Christianity shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch.

III. The Church throughout the World

When Barnabas and Saul were sent from Antioch on their first missionary journey, a real foreign mission movement was definitely set going. The Church at Antioch, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, set up a foreign program, selected its first missionaries, and planned to project the gospel into regions beyond. In our next chapter we will take up a study of Paul, the great missionary, and his expanding program. It is needful here, therefore, in completing this sketch, only to say that Luke's record of the foreign mission expansion indicates that in about fifteen years of heroic labors as foreign missionaries Paul and his companions succeeded in planting the gospel in the great centers of life in the Mediterranean world and in launching a movement which "is still in progress and which will not end until the prophecy made to the eleven apostles on the slopes of Olivet is fulfilled." (Acts i. 8.)

IV. The Method Significant

We observe from Luke's record of these events not only the fact that the Church reached beyond Jewish borders, but the methods by which the Christian movement extended. In both the movement and the method we are profoundly interested. We have surveyed the former; let us now examine the latter. Again we must follow the expanding movements, this time to examine the method rather than

the movement. In such a study one is impressed by the natural but striking way in which God employed persons, utilized agencies, and released influences in carrying forward his purpose to encompass all lands with the gospel message. He combines the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine. We note:

1. **God Uses His Friends.**—Stephen, "a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit," bore testimony and "did great wonders and miracles among the people." (Read Acts vi. 1-8.) "But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." (Acts vi. 9, 10.) When they could not silence him they stoned him to death. But all the bitterness of Jewish hate could not hush the voice of truth. The soul of Saul was stirred by the witness of Stephen, and a greater voice erelong took up the message.

Philip, being driven out of his home city, went into Samaria preaching with great power and success. (Acts viii. 5-8.) Later God called him to take a long journey, which seemed difficult and aimless, but which issued in definite missionary results. (Acts viii. 26-40.) Peter and John, on hearing of the missionary triumphs in Samaria, went down to confirm the faith of the converts and to instruct them in the things of God. (Acts viii. 14-17.)

2. **God Used His Foes.**—There was not in all Jerusalem a Jew who more bitterly hated the Christians or more stoutly opposed the Christian Church than Saul of Tarsus. He was chosen by the Jewish officials because of his peculiar fitness to lead in the movement to exterminate the Christians. Yet God used young Rabbi Saul by causing his cruel persecutions of Jerusalem Christians to scatter them throughout Judæa and Samaria. Aflame with a

great passion for God, these Christians proclaimed the good tidings wherever they went. Thus Saul unwittingly scattered the seed of the gospel through ever-widening areas. (Acts viii. 3, 4.) Scattering the Christians by persecution was like scattering firebrands on a dry prairie. They became flaming evangelists wherever they went. God knew, but Saul did not understand, the genius of Christianity. "It thrives on persecution. Prosperity has often been fatal to it, persecution never." (Stalker.)

3. **God Used Spiritual Forces.**—It was through his foes that God opened the way, but through his friends that spiritual forces were released for the conversion of the world. The fleeing Christians were living witnesses to the power of Christ to transform human lives. They could not by force of organization break down Jewish persecutions; they could not by force of arms overturn the Roman opposition; but they could bear witness to a Power divine which was able to accomplish greater wonders than either of these achievements would have been. Like the Master, these persecuted Christians seemed to have embraced every opportunity opened by providence, not only for preaching to the amazed and interested multitudes, but for testifying to eager-hearted individuals wherever met. (Acts viii. 4, 5.) A Christian martyr's testimony in life and in death, the steadfastness of the Church under cruel persecution, the preaching of the truth as it is in Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling among men were the influences contributing to the outreach of the Church and the rapid spread of the good news. (Read Acts vii. 54-viii. 5, 17.)

V. A Challenge from the Past

As we have seen, the apostolic Church was planted in the midst of a civilization unspeakably rotten and from the beginning encountered fiercest persecutions, yet it survived and steadily advanced. Daily the

followers of the Way faced threats of foul dungeon and cruel death. Nevertheless they were faithful witnesses and ceased not to preach the word. They were able to win souls for Christ, to build up his Church, to shake the foundations of the civilization of their day, and to change the currents of the world's social, political, and religious life.

What think you of the Church in the world of to-day? The world's present turbulence and distress, the broken nations, the disturbed peoples, the grinding poverty, the surging of the new tides of social and political unrest, and the growing concern, on the one hand, to know about Jesus as the world's hope and the deepening hate, on the other hand, of him who would found a civilization on the "Golden Rule," constitute a mighty challenge to the Church of to-day to make Christ known, to revive the spirit and passion of the pioneers of apostolic days, and to channel the mighty movement of modern times for Jesus Christ.

In all these experiences of our modern world there is reopened a missionary opportunity such as confronted the Church of the first century. The Jerusalem revival and the Samaritan mission were missionary beginnings; the end is not yet. Step by step the truth marches on. Human selfishness and disobedience have retarded but can never wholly check the kingdom's advance. There have been periods in the history of the Church when the tides of missionary interest ebbed. Adverse movements have been encountered, and at times progress has been painfully slow. But the nineteenth century brought a great missionary awakening and the greatest organized missionary movement since Pentecost. The twentieth century has already recorded miracles of missions which read like the Acts of the Apostles. The future is bright with the promise of yet more rapid progress.

With the passing of the centuries God's methods remain unchanged. He still uses human person-

alities, employs mechanical agencies, and releases subtle spiritual influences in extending his kingdom. He still overrules the schemes of his enemies and makes even the persecution of Christians by the foes of Jesus Christ a means of promoting his kingdom among men.

The world has never seen greater atrocities than have occurred in the Japanese oppression of the Korean Church and in the Turkish persecution of Armenian and Greek Christians. Yet out of these tragedies the Korean Church has emerged strong, purified as by fire, and better prepared for its ministry to a broken-hearted people. By the murderous hate and slaughtering hand of the Turk, the Christian world is being so aroused to the need of the practice of Christian principles in all international and interracial contacts that world-wide reforms are inevitable.

The world has never witnessed a greater rejection of ennobling ideals nor a greater revolt against a reign of righteousness than appeared in Germany's repudiation of Jesus and her deification of the State; nor a more barbarous onslaught upon peace-loving nations than was made by the German war lords. Nevertheless, Jesus of Nazareth is more influential in the world to-day than ever before. He is more bitterly hated, yet more devotedly loved. He is more viciously resisted, yet more eagerly accepted. He is more openly repudiated by governments, yet more widely sought after by the people.

The discoveries of science and the marvelous inventions of modern times are utilized as instruments of evil; nevertheless all agencies of modern progress are to-day at the command of the Church for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. After reviewing the tragedies of the World War just passed and the bitterness and strife which have followed, and after measuring the forces of evil which play upon the nations, we still see Jesus of Nazareth, upstanding, potential, the central figure in all history and the one

bright star of hope in the sky of a darkened world. We realize anew that to-day, as in apostolic times, the truth as it is in Christ can neither be fettered by antagonisms, confined by opposition, nor destroyed by persecutions.

Test Questions

1. What was the historical background of the day of Pentecost?
2. How did the Roman persecutions of the early Christians advance the spread of the kingdom?
3. Recount the activities of the three disciples who first carried the gospel beyond Jewry.
4. What great missionary lesson may the Church to-day learn from the example of the Church at Antioch?
5. Indicate briefly your view regarding the present world outlook for missions.

CHAPTER XI

PAUL THE GREAT APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

A THRILLING story is that of Paul. It is the record of providential preparation, a missionary call, an expanding missionary vision, and an heroic missionary service. One cannot follow this record through without seeing beyond a peradventure that God prepared Saul of Tarsus to break the holding bands of narrow nationalism and religious particularism, which threatened to confine the application of the gospel message to Jews alone, and equipped him to publish beyond Jewry the "good news" of salvation.

I. PROVIDENTIAL PREPARATION

From his youth Saul was in preparation for the great task which God had in view for him. The young man was not seeking preparation for such a career, but "there is a Divinity which shapes our ends," and it was fashioning the mind and character of Saul of Tarsus for a career of which he had never dreamed. God's purpose in Paul's preparation and the wide sweep of Paul's influence as an apostle of God make a very definite contribution to our interpretation of Jesus's program and God's plan for the world. There is significance in each of the outstanding facts which appear in Paul's preparation.

1. **His Birthplace.**—Paul was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia. Situated upon the highway of trade and travel, the city was a center of commerce. Its inhabitants were numerous and wealthy. The greater part were Cilicians, but there were many wealthy Greek merchants, Roman officials, travelers and traders from all parts of the empire. The city was also a center of learning. It had a university and rivaled Athens and Alexandria in intellectual

eminence. In this center of trade and learning Paul grew up. History shows him a Roman citizen, in touch with numerous nationalities, acquainted with the travelers and tradespeople from far countries, accustomed to their diverse habits and customs, in constant contact with students from all parts of the world and familiar with their thoughts and intellectual interests.

2. **Nationality and Religion.**—Paul called himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was a devout Jew, reared in the home of a Jew who, though he had left the Holy Land, had not forgotten it. He had been faithful to national ideals and religious customs. He belonged to the strictest sect of his religion. His home was a home of piety. Young Saul's mother was no doubt a devout Jewess. The boy was taught the Law and the Prophets and became versed in all the Scriptures. In his youth his heroes were such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, and Ezra. His dream was of a Messianic kingdom and a mighty political ruler to come from God.

3. **Familiar with Heathenism.**—Living in Tarsus, Saul not only came in touch with the political and industrial movements of his day, but with the most offensive forms of heathenism. This tended to fill his soul with abhorrence for the degrading practices of such religions and to emphasize in his mind the higher and better things of the religion of Israel.

4. **Trained as a Rabbi.**—In his youth religious teaching was selected for him as a career. He was therefore sent to Jerusalem to be trained for the office of rabbi—"a minister, teacher, and lawyer all in one." By reason of this training he became versed in the history, philosophy, prophecies, and traditions of his religion.

5. **In Contact with Christianity.**—When Paul came directly in contact with that new sect which believed that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jewish people and which in consequence had abandoned the

strict legalism of the Jews, his zeal for Judaism and his aggressive nature led him to throw himself with indignation against them. His open opposition won for him the favor of the Jewish officials and, Stalker says, probably a seat in the Sanhedrin. In any event it led to his appointment as a leader in the movement of the Jews to exterminate Christianity. Into this stupendous undertaking he threw himself with tremendous force. So bitter were the persecutions that Paul came to see the stuff of Christian manhood and to deal with spiritual forces which he could not analyze or understand.

Through the cumulative effect of all these influences and experiences God was preparing Paul for the mighty conviction which fell upon him when he met the Lord face to face on the road to Damascus and was making him ready for the responsibility of being "a light of the Gentiles" and for "salvation unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

II. Called to Be a Missionary

1. Called at Conversion.—While still blinded by the effulgence of the glorified humanity in which Christ Jesus appeared unto him and now conscious of the divine mastership of Jesus, Saul, with deep emotion, cried, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6a, King James Version.) The Lord was ready with the answer: "Arise and enter the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." (Acts ix. 6b.)

In the city of Damascus there awaited a servant of God, Ananias by name, to whom God had revealed his life plan for Saul, thus preparing him to guide the course of the young rabbi. "But the Lord said unto him [Ananias], Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Acts ix. 15, 16.) Ten years

later he justifies his turning from the Jews by saying: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts xiii. 47.) Is it not perfectly clear that the Gentile world is included in this plan of God for Paul's life work?

2. **The Call Progressive.**—The statement just quoted, in justification of his course, was made very soon after an experience which confirmed in Paul's mind the conviction that God had called him to be a foreign missionary. The story runs in this wise: "Now there were at Antioch, in the Church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." (Acts xiii. 1-4.) From this time on his labors are directed chiefly toward the Gentile world.

3. **Conviction Unshakable.**—See how deep and abiding is Paul's sense of a divine call. To the Galatians he writes: "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. i. 15, 16.) To the Romans he writes: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God concerning Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom I have received the favor of my commission to promote obedience to the faith for his sake among all the Gentiles, including yourselves, who are called to belong to Jesus Christ." (Rom. i. 1-5.)

Paul had not yet been to Rome. In expressing by letter his longing to visit the great capital he reveals a depth of conviction, a range of interest, and a sense of obligation which leave no doubt as to his consciousness of a divine commission: "And I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (and was hindered hitherto), that I might have some fruit in you also, even as in the rest of the Gentiles. I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. i. 13-16.) Nothing less than a deep and abiding conviction of a call from God could have held even Paul to a ministry to alien peoples, in foreign lands, involving such physical hardships and cruel persecutions.

III. The Field of His Operations

It was a little world as we see things to-day, the southern countries of Europe and those portions of Western Asia and Northern Africa which lie along the Mediterranean. But here centered the world's civilization and trade and the political forces which ruled the nations. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews were the races which dominated civilization. The Greeks were dominant in literature and art, the Romans in government and arms, and the Jews in religion. It was a world that Paul knew so well that when he came to know Jesus and the power of his resurrection he wanted to sweep the circuit of the nations, proclaiming the gospel to the Gentile world —to Greeks and Romans and even to the barbarians.

1. **Beginning in Asia.**—A glance at the map reveals the fact that Paul's first missionary journey was in the nature of an experiment. His soul burned with a passion to spread the gospel in Asia and

Europe, but no one had blazed the way. His purpose was to pioneer. It was necessary, therefore, that he and his companions be put to the test. Accordingly, in company with Barnabas and John Mark, he set forth from Antioch to attack heathenism in the island of Cyprus, the home of Barnabas, and then in the regions round about his own native province. They reached Cyprus, stopped first at Salamis, then crossing the island, preaching as they went, came to Paphos, the chief city of the island and a hotbed of heathen vices. Here Paul preached with power and from time to time matched Christianity against superstition and treachery. Here he converted the Roman governor and established the nucleus of a Christian Church. From Paphos they traveled northward, traversing the provinces of Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lyconia, and penetrating Cilicia. On this journey they were able to gather sufficient converts to plant the Church in Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

The return journey might have been made by a short route, through the Cilician Gates of Mount Taurus, via Tarsus to Antioch. But Paul and his companions preferred to retrace their steps, in spite of the hardships of the way and enmities engendered by their preaching, in order to strengthen the Churches they had organized and to establish others as opportunity might arise. They revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, and preached in other towns of Pisidia and Pamphilia, finally sailing from Attalia to Antioch in Syria.

2. **Invading Europe.**—Paul with his young companion Silas set out upon his second missionary journey. Paul desired to make a visitation of the Churches is Asia Minor, in the founding of which he had taken part. Beginning at Antioch, they went through northern Cilicia, Phrygia, and Galatia. (Acts xv. 41; xvi. 1.) At Lystra, in South Galatia, Timothy joined them, participating in the work and accompanying them on the journey. The Churches

were instructed in the faith and increased in numbers daily. Encouraged at the results of their labors and restless to press on, Paul thought of Asia, a densely populated province in the west of Asia Minor, as an inviting field. But they were "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." (Acts xvi. 6.) So with his companions he passed on through the rest of Galatia and Phrygia; and when they had come to Mysia, Paul's thoughts turned to Bithynia, a large province on the Black Sea. But again the "spirit of Jesus suffered them not." (Acts xvi. 7.)

Then Paul turned westward and soon found himself at Troas. He looks across the Hellespont to the shores of Europe. His heart is stirred by the possibility of challenging heathenism in the very centers of the world's life. "He was now within the charmed circle where for ages civilization had had her home; and he could not be entirely ignorant of those stories of war and enterprise, and those legends of love and valor, which have made it forever bright and dear to the heart of mankind. At only four miles' distance lay the plain of Troy, where Europe and Asia encountered each other in the stuggle celebrated in Homer's immortal song. Not far off Xerxes, sitting on a marble throne, reviewed the three millions of Asiatics with which he meant to bring Europe to his feet. On the other side of that narrow strait lay Greece and Rome, the centers from which issued the learning, the commerce, and the armies which governed the world. Could his heart, so ambitious for the glory of Christ, fail to be fired with the desire to cast himself upon these strongholds, or could he doubt that the Spirit was leading him forward to this enterprise? He knew that Greece, with all her wisdom, lacked that knowledge which makes wise unto salvation, and that the Romans, though they were the conquerors of this world, did not know the way of winning an inheritance in the world that is to come; but in his breast he carried the secret which they both required." (Stalker.)

How such thoughts must have deepened the purpose of the brave apostle! Yet a greater thrill awaited him. Here at Troas he met his friend Luke, the physician. This group of four devoted servants of God no doubt talked and prayed much concerning plans for the extension of the kingdom. During this period of counsel and prayer with his friends "a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us." (Acts xvi. 9.) This vision stirred Paul mightily. He accepted it as a call from God.

There were no Christians in Macedonia to come over to Troas to invite Paul and his companions to make a visit to Macedonia for the purpose of preaching the gospel; so God sent a vision. In a sense he wrought a miracle in order to bring Paul face to face with Europe's need and the opportunity which lay ahead. Paul had been following obediently the leading of the Divine Spirit. "When a man is on the right road all sorts of opportunities open to him." God now threw open the doors of the great western world to this apostle called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul seems to have yielded himself so completely to God's guidance that we are not surprised at his prompt obedience. "And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them." (Acts xvi. 10.) It is significant that his companions also accepted the call as from God and shared in his obedience.

It would seem from the "we" that Luke accompanied the party on this journey. They set sail promptly from Troas and with a straight course came to the shores of Macedonia. Perhaps Paul's prompt and fearless obedience was one secret of his power. His ear seemed ever attentive to the voice of God, his heart unafraid when assured of God's leading.

The purpose of the apostle bore him to the chief cities of Macedonia and Achaia. In Philippi it was found that the God who called the great apostle into Europe had gone before preparing the way for the message. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." (Acts xvi. 14.) "Whose heart the Lord opened." The soil had been made ready for the sowing of the seed; the harvest was prompt and beautiful.

It is both interesting and significant that the first convert in Europe was a woman. Amid the general decay of religions throughout the world, woman had suffered most. Her heart yearned, therefore, more eagerly for God, and many women became proselytes to the Jewish faith and sought the comfort of the synagogue. This was especially true in northern Macedonia, where religious decadence had been less marked than in the southern provinces of Greece. The conversion of Lydia was a "good omen; it was a prophecy of the happy change in the lot of woman which Christianity was to produce in the nations of the West."

God called Paul into Europe. Paul obeyed. God opened the heart of Lydia. Paul preached the word with power. Lydia was converted and with her family entered the household of faith. God and Paul working together thus began, in the quiet meeting place of prayer by the riverside, the invasion of Europe in the name of Christ.

After a brief stay at Amphipolis, Paul touched Apollonia and then for three Sabbaths preached in Thessalonica in a Jewish synagogue. He succeeded in founding a Church, mostly of Gentiles. To this Church soon after he wrote the two epistles, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In this city were many Jews, and when the Gentiles turned in large numbers to Christ

the Jews incited a riot and drove Paul and his friends from the city.

Passing to Berea Paul found a generous hearing, and many accepted his gospel.

Then on to Athens Paul pressed his way. Now he found himself standing in the very center of pagan culture and preaching Christ in the heart of the most famous city of the world. His preaching in Athens seemed to have been a failure, but Paul's eloquent deliverances were an omen of the mighty change which should be wrought in the thinking of the world through his influence.

From Athens Paul went on to Corinth, the commercial and political metropolis of Greece at that time. It was a wicked city, the heart of corruption and licentiousness. Here he continued for a year and a half preaching the gospel and working meanwhile at his trade as a tentmaker. While here he wrote two epistles to the Thessalonians. Paul became greatly attached to the Corinthian Christians and later wrote to them two of his longest epistles.

After his sojourn in Corinth Paul turned his face once more toward Jerusalem, completing on his return to the Jewish capital a foreign mission journey of more than a thousand miles. Here he tarried but a short while to salute the Church and deliver the gifts of the Gentile Christians to the Jewish saints in Judæa. He then left overland for Antioch, his missionary headquarters.

Compared to the long journeys of the modern missionaries even Paul's second journey seems but a small circuit; but when we recall the tiny world of his day, the modes of travel, the dangers and hardships of the way, the turbulence of the sea, the treachery of heathenism, the mountain fastnesses traversed, and the robbers that lurked in secret places, we are prepared to wonder at the missionary passion which fired the soul of the great apostle and to approve Stalker's judgment when he says: "There

are some men whose lives it is impossible to study without receiving the impression that they were expressly sent into the world to do a work required by the juncture of history on which they fell. . . . This impression is produced by no life more than by that of the apostle Paul."

When we seek to measure Paul's influence upon succeeding generations, we assent also to the statement: "The fate of the European continent was decided when Paul crossed the Ægean."

3. **Filling the Gap.**—On Paul's third missionary journey, which occupied about four years, he filled the gap along the western coast of Asia Minor which had not been touched by him on either his first or second journey. On his westward journey he visited the Churches in Galatia and Phrygia, planted on his former tour, and sought to strengthen them.

From the highlands Paul came down to Ephesus, where he had previously been but had not tarried. Now he was to stay longer in one city than was his wont. Ephesus was the metropolis of Proconsular Asia. It became the third capital of Christianity, as Jerusalem had been its birthplace and Antioch the center of its foreign missions. The planting of the Church at Ephesus was an epoch in the missionary career of Paul, and is the outstanding event of his third missionary journey.

It is not needful for our purpose to trace Paul's journey from city to city nor to recite the thrilling incidents attendant thereon. It is interesting, however, to know that he started on his return journey to Jerusalem with a desire to reach there in time for the feast of Pentecost. For the purpose of safety the journey was made by a circuitous route. Erelong, however, Paul for the last time entered the city of Jerusalem from which he was soon to go forth the "prisoner of the Lord."

The last of Paul's recorded journeys was not designed as a missionary expedition. It all came about through the hostility of the Jewish mob

which seized him in the court of the women in the temple and dragged him into the court of the Gentiles, where perhaps he would have been slain but for the intervention of the Roman soldiers. Here he made an address from the stairs, following which he was thrown into prison. Appealing to the higher authorities for justice, he was carried under guard to the great capital of the empire. He was a prisoner of the imperial government, bound with chains and under guard. Nevertheless, in court room or in dungeon, in bonds or free, he was a mighty preacher of the gospel of Christ, and through contact with him Roman soldiers and casual acquaintances were turned unto the Lord and set aflame with the love of Christ and went out to herald the "good news" of salvation. A great desire of Paul's heart was attained when he reached the Roman capital. For two years he dwelt a prisoner in that city, and here at the very center of the world's political influence ends all that is positively known of the journeys of the great apostle to the Gentiles.

IV. The Meaning of Paul's Heroic Ministry

The wide range of Paul's travels and the dauntless courage with which he persevered in projecting the gospel into the Gentile world, the abiding influence of his labors, together with his clear sense of a divine call, lead us to see that his career was an important part in God's plan to bring all nations under the sway of Jesus of Nazareth.

Can we imagine that all that Paul did and dared cost him nothing? Hear him as he tried to lead the wayward Corinthians to recognize his claim to their obedience as a true apostle by reminding them of what he had suffered for the gospel's sake: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I

forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches." (2 Cor. xi. 23-28.) What measureless suffering! Is there no challenge to us in Paul's devotion and sacrifice? Is there not here for us an ideal of abandon to the great task of winning the world for Christ? We cannot explain Paul, a potent personality in the world of his day, apart from his missionary labors.

With Paul pioneering was a passion. In the heart of him burned the enthusiasm of the martyr. From the early days of his encounter with Jesus Christ he interpreted the gospel in world terms. His eager, restless soul struggled to press on, to reach out into new areas, to herald abroad the good news. His was an independent, aggressive spirit. He was loath to build on another man's foundation, to dig in old fields. He was eager to preach to those to whom the message had not been spoken and to proclaim the salvation of God to those who had not heard. (Read Romans xv. 20, 21; Isaiah lii. 15.)

V. Voices Calling Yet

1. The Call To-Day.— Paul's readiness to hear and obey God is seen in his attitude toward the call to Europe. His Macedonian call came in a dream. To this vision he was straightway obedient. Thus the gospel reached Europe. How much greater the urge upon us to carry the gospel to the nations that sit in darkness!

Our call does not come in the night hours of slumber in the form of a vision, nor yet in daydreams; but living men, redeemed from the darkness of heathenism, having sailed the seas, stand in our midst and cry aloud: "Come over and help us." God's call to us is more real, more direct, more vocal, hence more irresistible, than a dream call, because sounded by word of mouth and reënforced by stories of personal experience and of human need.

2. **What Shall the Answer Be?**—So responsive to the leading of God was Paul that when this vision came, straightway he obeyed. Prompt obedience is the only sure way of keeping up with the will of God. Paul heard the man saying: "Come over into Macedonia and help us." "That figure represented Europe and its cry for help, Europe's need of Christ. Paul recognized in it a divine summons; and the very next sunset which bathed the Hellespont in its golden light shone upon his figure seated on the deck of a ship, the prow of which was moving toward the shore of Macedonia." (Stalker.)

The destiny of nations depended upon Paul's prompt obedience. Who can tell what issues may hang upon our attitude to-day as the broken-hearted, overburdened, warring nations of Europe and the awaking, restless, drifting peoples of the Far East, and the benighted tribes of the great Dark Continent cry to Christian America for spiritual guidance and for the blessings of the gospel of love and brotherhood? Why not straightway obey, that the evangel may find its way in saving power and wondrous healing to all men everywhere?

Have we the passion to press on? (Rom. xv. 18-26.) Unquestionably the consuming passion of Paul to win new lands for Jesus Christ upbore his spirit and sustained him amid unmeasured opposition, indescribable suffering, and unimaginable sacrifices. His was the passion of the true missionary.

There are perils to the life of the Church in the

softness and self-indulgence of our day. To offset the influences of ease, luxury, and pleasure-lust, we must carefully foster in the heart of youth the spirit of adventure, love for the heroic, the passion of the Christian pioneer, and a consecration like Paul's if ever the Church is to be prepared for world conquest.

Test Questions

1. Discuss the providential elements in Paul's preparation for a foreign missionary.
2. Describe the field of his operations.
3. Try to estimate Paul's contribution to Christian civilization.
4. Compare Paul's Macedonian call to the individual Christian's call to-day.
5. Can you conceive of a true Christian not having a passion for world-wide missions?

CHAPTER XII

THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLES

In former chapters we have made a brief study of the gospel story, tracing the missionary elements in the ministry and message of Jesus. We have reviewed the Acts of the Apostles, noting the main features of Paul's call and world journeys, and the salient facts in the rapid spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Through the historic part of the New Testament missions runs like a clear, bold stream.

We now turn to the Epistles, for they also have an important missionary bearing. Unfortunately, however, students often come to the study of the Epistles so absorbed in theological questions as to miss altogether their missionary aspect. All these letters are rich in missionary meaning. They supplement the missionary idea in the Gospels and the Acts and contribute greatly to the continuity of the missionary message as it runs through the whole of the New Testament. Should one be disposed to discredit the missionary character of the Epistles, such a disposition is sure to be surrendered if he will seek, in the process of his study, to answer the following questions:

1. Who wrote this epistle? What of his history and characteristics?
2. In what work was he engaged?
3. To whom did he write and why?
4. How were the early Churches organized and set going?
5. Against what forces were the apostles contending, and how were these forces overcome?

We have space for only a brief study of the Epistles and their writers. Let us begin with Paul and his

letters. Paul was above all else a missionary. His letters were those of a missionary to his converts or to those who wrought with him in spreading the gospel. They were written in order to conserve his missionary labors by encouraging his converts to faith and Christian living, by building up the Church in doctrine and character, by encouraging the Christians to resist the foes of the kingdom and by warning them against corrupting heathenism.

I. The Letters of a Missionary

The character and work of the author and the aim and content of the letters make the Epistles of Paul a great contribution to the missionary literature of the Church. To evaluate properly their missionary elements we must recall that Paul when he first appeared upon the scene was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, rigid and bigoted in his observance of Jewish law and ceremony. By and by, however, he accepted Christ as a Saviour from sin and as a deliverer from the law. Impelled by a great faith in the power of the divine Lord whom he had met on the road to Damascus, inspired by his own emancipation from the shackles of legalism, and providentially prepared for such a task, Paul threw himself against heathenism with a message aflame with the passion of a personal experience of redeeming grace. For nearly thirty years he traveled and labored with an abandon almost unimaginable in his effort to bear the message of Christianity to all mankind. Often hindered in his plans and labors by physical frailties, the number and scattered location of his mission stations, the delays and difficulties of travel, open opposition and frequent imprisonments, Paul sought to keep in touch with the Churches, for their development, by sending letters. Of these, nine or ten to the Churches and four personal Epistles have been preserved for us. All have a decided missionary value.

The modern missionary finds in these Epistles of Paul a great inspiration to steadfastness and hope amid the difficulties of his task, as he encounters the obstinacy of heathenism. Here he finds also counsel and comfort, because the writings of the great missionary spring from daily contacts with heathenism and from a wisdom born of actual experience.

To the Church at home the letters of Paul have also a peculair missionary significance. They let us into the secrets of the missionary's life and labors as does no other portion of the New Testament. When rightly understood, therefore, they tend to awaken a new appreciation of the missionary and of his task and to impart a sense of partnership in his labors.

Let us remember that if Paul had never been a missionary, if he had never succeeded in planting the gospel in heathen lands, if he had never established Churches in foreign parts, we should never have had the Pauline Epistles. "Paul's letters were the product of his heart and were drawn out of him by the exigencies of his missionary work." For example, he writes to the Thessalonians because in the pressure of labors he had to leave at Thessalonica young converts who were not fully instructed in the Christian life. He writes, therefore, with the tenderness of a father to his children, exhorting them to right conduct.

Paul's letters are sent to the Corinthians to reprove them for sins that had crept into the Church and to warn them of the corrupting influence of heathen immoralities so common in that great city.

The apostle writes to the Churches of Galatia because here, on two missionary journeys, he had gathered many converts out of heathenism, only to have them disturbed by Judaizers who argued that to become Christians they must first become Jews.

To the Romans Paul writes because his great missionary heart is filled with longing to visit them.

At last Paul's missionary career is abruptly terminated. The Roman law and prison walls now re-

strain this tireless missionary from further visitation of the Churches. While thus confined he writes to the Colossians and Ephesians, seeking by letters to "deepen and consolidate the truths which he had previously taught." To the Philippians he writes with eager interest and out of a heart of love and gratitude, for at Philippi the first Christian Church in Europe was planted by Paul himself, and through all the years he had loved the Philippians with a peculiar tenderness. Now he is writing to tell them of this love and to thank them for the liberality with which they have supported his missionary enterprise.

"Thus it is not that St. Paul gives occasional incitements or directions for missionary work; it is not that here or there in his letters we find him arguing that the message comes to Gentile as well as to Jew, or that 'God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth'; it is not that we see him now and again selecting and dispatching missionary agents, Barnabas, Silas, Epaphras, Mark, or Timothy, that justifies us in claiming for this part of the New Testament, a missionary character; but these letters are missionary productions through and through, and have no significance apart from that characteristic. Livingstone might be regarded as an explorer no less than a missionary; Mackay, as an engineer; Hannington, as a prelate; but Paul is nothing save a missionary. His writings know no other subject, his heart is occupied with no other wish but to make Christ known where he was not known before." (Horton.)

The letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus are the communications of a general superintendent of the missions of the Church to two superintendents of foreign mission stations. Timothy was superintendent (or bishop) of the great city of Ephesus, and Titus directed the work in the island of Crete. These letters are full of directions and suggestions concerning the administration of Church officers and of

personal counsel and earnest exhortation to steadfastness in the faith. Timothy was reared a Hebrew; Titus was a convert from heathenism. Both of these young men had been companions of Paul in missionary labors and were his devoted and trusted friends. Having proved themselves faithful servants of Christ and capable of bearing hardness as good soldiers, it is not surprising that they were sent on foreign missions. As the missionary to-day confronts the darkness of heathenism or the blind superstitions of paganism, these pastoral epistles bear a message all their own. No change is needed except in the date line. The text still extends the counsel and comfort which the missionary needs.

II. A Missionary Treatise

That eloquent treatise, or essay, which we call the Hebrews, is a superb and unanswerable argument for the superiority of the Christian over the Jewish dispensation. The epistle shows how the transition is made from the legalistic system to that of the gospel, from the Mosaic system to that of Christ, and from the Jewish synagogue to the Christian Church. The argument is that the time has come for Judaism, a preparatory system and essentially limited in its scope, to pass away. The inherent superiority of Christianity is given as the reason why it should supersede Judaism. It is made plain that all that was promised and prefigured in Judaism has been fulfilled in Christ; hence the old glory of Judaism should give way to the greater glory of Christianity, a religion meant for all the world; for in Christ God is dealing with man as man; that is, with all mankind. Chapter VII reveals the priesthood of Melchizedek as existing outside of the Jewish nation and yet as ordained of God. In Chapter XI among the worthies who obtained salvation by faith we find the names of Gentiles included among the Jews.

The content of Hebrews indicates that it is the connecting link between the old and the new dispensation, suggesting throughout the universal character of revelation and the proprietorship of Jesus in this and all worlds. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the world." (Heb. i. 1, 2.)

It is clear then that the Letter to the Hebrews carries a missionary message in its testimony to the continuity and universality of revelation and in the place and mission accorded Christ and Christianity.

III. Missions in Other Epistles

The missionary impress is not so distinct in other than the Pauline Epistles. Yet in most of them it is sufficiently clear to justify our contention that the missionary theme runs unbroken through the literature of the New Testament. For example, Peter's first letter was addressed to believers, Gentiles as well as Hebrews, scattered throughout the districts of Asia Minor: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." (1 Peter i. 1.) It is striking that this rugged, tender message which in his last days Peter bequeathed to the people of God should have been sent to "strangers of the Dispersion." When we remember how stubborn Peter was in yielding up his Jewish narrowness and how Paul, on one occasion, had to withstand him to the face on this very subject of admitting the Gentiles, it is the more striking that twice at least in this epistle Peter addresses himself to Gentile believers. (1 Peter ii. 10; iv. 3.) His letters indicate a complete conversion to the broad and all-inclusive views that Paul advocated.

The Epistle of James begins with an address to

the "twelve tribes scattered abroad." (James i. 1.) Thus it is "a testimony to the missionary expansion of the apostolic age." The Jewish people had by this time been widely dispersed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Many in all these regions had embraced Christianity, and the bishop of Jerusalem felt himself responsible as the spiritual father of the people of his blood in all the world. While addressed to Jews, its application is by no means limited to them. John, the Beloved, swings away from all Jewish particularism, national narrowness, and race prejudice and, with a heart big enough to grasp the glory and the greatness of redeeming love, writes of God as light—light for all the world. He writes of God as love—love great enough to encompass all men. This love finds its perfect expression in the gift of light and life to man in the Person of the only begotten Son. Such a man, with such a theme, could not think in terms of prejudice or exclusiveness. John's letters are sure to go with their message of light and love the world round until every dark land is lighted and the hearts of men everywhere are awakened to the love of God. Surely no one can question the universal scope and application of John's message.

IV. The Book of Revelation

The book of Revelation was written to meet an extraordinary emergency in the life of the Church. A time of terrific persecution was upon the saints. The Church was threatened with extermination by the mighty hand of Rome. The Christians were subject to severe trials of faith and loyalty, for a decree had gone forth that all subjects of Rome should worship the emperor. Only the Jews were exempt. The Orientals were glad to accept the new worship. Only a little band of Christians were left to resist the authority of a cruel and jealous monarch. They must choose Cæsar or Christ. Persecutions, tortures, imprisonments, and death awaited them

should they remain loyal to their faith. The object of the book of Revelation was, therefore, to establish the faith of Christians in God's goodness and justice and to inspire courage to endure persecutions and even death, if need be, in the full confidence that God reigns and that Christ lives, conquering and to conquer. John endeavors to do this along four clearly defined lines:

First, he dwells upon the grandeur and eternity of the risen Lord that he may inspire confidence and hope in the hearts of the suffering Christians through the remembrance that Christ is God, eternal and unfailing. "John to the seven Churches that are in Asia; Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood." (Rev. i. 4, 5.) "The four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying: Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created." (Rev. iv. 10, 11.) "And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.)

Second, he reminds the faithful of the wide reach which the gospel has already attained, and of the transforming power of its message which has saved multitudes in all parts of the earth. John realizes that there is a sense of strength in numbers, that confidence is quickened through fellowship, and that

the scattered and suffering Churches are apt to grow discouraged through a sense of loneliness and disaster. So he writes down his vision of the hosts out of every nation who had come up out of "the great tribulation" to worship and bear testimony concerning salvation from God. "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . And I say unto him, My Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 9, 10, 14.)

Third, John revives the confidence of the Churches in the certainty of the spread of the gospel throughout all the world. The assurance given is that persecutions and slaughter cannot stay the onward sweep of the "good tidings" until all that dwell on earth have heard. He hears the song of the Lamb and records the words that the Church may know that all the nations shall come and worship the Lord. "And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters." (Rev. xiv. 6, 7.) "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and

worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest." (Rev. xv. 3, 4.)

Fourth, John holds out the hope of a final triumph of the cause of righteousness. He is mightily stirred by a vision of the kingdoms of this world as the kingdom of our Lord. The reign of righteousness has supplanted the era of bitterness and hate and of persecutions and martyrdom. The great power of an Almighty God is engaged in governing the nations. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshiped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power and didst reign." (Rev. xi. 15-17.) John is filled with reverence and awe and rises to an ecstasy of triumph when he sees the King upon his steed, beholds his royal garments and reads the name written upon his thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Read Revelation xix. 11-16.)

Let us bear in mind that John sees a "new earth" as well as a "new heaven." (Read Revelation xxi. 1.) The whole point of his message is that "deliverance is at hand and that this deliverance is bound up with the person of Christ." (Calkins.)

The purpose of our study does not lead us into the meaning of the "new heaven." We are content to find in this wonderful book of Revelation the assurance that the worker for righteousness, in all ages and in all lands, has behind him this inspired book. "It tells him that behind all the movements of history, and underlying all human efforts for a better world order, there is a God at work; there is the omnipotent Christ traveling in the glory of his strength. Evil cannot permanently withstand these divine forces that already have decreed its overthrow.

The victory of righteousness is involved in the very nature of God. Christ is the guarantee. Here is the unshakable foundation. In his darkest days in darkest Africa, David Livingstone could write these words: 'He will keep his word. He will bring it to pass. I may fall by the way, being unworthy to see the dawning I had hoped to see. It will come, though; it must come, and I do not despair of the day one bit. Doubt is here inadmissible surely.' It is the only sure foundation of missionary success. 'These sayings are faithful and true.'" (Calkins.)

As John in this apocalypse looked beyond the corruption of his day and the tribulations of his people and saw the kingdom of Christ established in power among men, so to-day faith, quickened by imagination and inspired by confidence in the world-encompassing power of redeeming love and in the efficacy of the grace of Christ, looks beyond this crooked and perverse generation, beyond the toil and sacrifice of the people of God, and sees the glorious consummation of the Christian conquest of the nations. As John heard out of heaven the voice of the infinite speaking of the glory and power and dominion of Jesus Christ, so faith, strengthened and sanctified through fellowship with Christ, hears above the din of human passion "a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. . . . The kingdom of the world is become the knigdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall regin for ever and ever." (Rev. xii. 10a; xi. 15b.)

It is true that the world of our day is distraught and broken by sin and the kingdom of brotherly love seems a far way off, yet surely, since we see how God's missionary purpose runs through the whole Book from Genesis through Revelation, there can be no mistaking the wide reach of the mission of Jesus. The true man of God to-day, living in touch with humanity and in fellowship with Christ, can say with tender compassion and unfailing confidence:

I know a soul that is steeped in sin,
That no man's art can cure;
But I know a Name, a Name, a Name
That can make that soul all pure.

I know a life that is lost to God,
Bound down by things of earth;
But I know a Name, a Name, a Name
That can bring that soul new birth.

I know of lands that are sunk in shame,
Of hearts that faint and tire;
But I know a Name, a Name, a Name
That can set those lands on fire.

So listen, comrades, an angel speaks
To save our world from loss;
Christ Jesus is the Name, the Name—
He saves by way of the cross.

(Author Unknown.)

Prayer: O God, help us to look beyond the sin and shame of a prostrate broken world to the hill crest upon which stands the cross of Christ! Help us to look beyond the radiant cross to the risen and glorified Son of God. May we see his glory shining through the clouds of doubt and sin which settle about our world! May we comprehend with greater faith and a new understanding the fullness of the life which is found in him! May faith ascribe unto him blessing, and honor, and glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen. (Read Revelation v. 13b.)

Test Questions

1. What five questions must the student answer in attempting a critical study of any book of the Bible?
2. In what respects are Paul's epistles missionary?
3. Do you agree with the statement that the Epistle to the Hebrews is the greatest missionary plea ever written?
4. Point out some missionary elements in epistles other than the Pauline.
5. For what purpose was the book of Revelation written?
6. What are the missionary implications of the book of Revelation?

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